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LATIN AND TEUTONIC

CHRISTENDOM

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LATIN AND TEUTONIC CHRISTENDOM

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AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

BY THE

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Late Scholar of Trinity College, Oxford

LONDON
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PREFACE.

REGARDED as a chapter in the history of the human mind, the history of Christianity must at all times have an equal interest. But the present attitude of the Latin Church towards the principles which are supposed to lie at the root of modern civilisation and to determine the course of modern thought, cannot fail to call special attention to the general character and working of the system for which it seems not unlikely to claim an absolute freedom from all error. The questions thus raised are simply questions of fact, and it is right that the facts involved in the controversy between the Roman Church and other Christian Societies should be brought before readers who have neither the time nor the means for mastering a detailed narrative of the great drama, of which the Council now assembled at Rome will scarcely be regarded as the closing scene. These facts are exhibited, I trust, with sufficient clearness in the following summary of a history every page of which furnishes materials for patient and

serious thought; and enough has perhaps been said to show the real character of the system which Mr. Ffoulkes and others have found to press so heavily on the honest and impartial historian.

To the reader these chapters are presented as sketches, which I have striven to make as accurate as I could, and which may exhibit the spirit and influence not only of the Latin Church, but of the monastic bodies which, with more or less success, have stood forward as its supporters.

The substance of these chapters has appeared already, chiefly in articles contributed by me to the 'Edinburgh Review;' and I have to thank the Editor for the permission to make use of these articles for the present volume. Of this matter, some portions have been re-written, while the whole has been re-arranged.

I avail myself gladly of this opportunity for expressing my veneration for the memory of the great historian of Latin Christianity. Twelve years have passed since the publication of the article from which I have taken the greater part of the materials for the first chapter, and these

years have but increased my feeling of gratitude to the late Dean of St. Paul's for that which I must regard as the first history of an age especially illustrious in its historians.

In these chapters I have honestly and candidly stated my convictions; and it is to me no slight gratification to think that probably no conclusions to which I have been brought would have failed to receive the sanction of his approval.

January 23, 1870.

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LATIN AND TEUTONIC CHRISTENDOM.

CHAPTER I.

THE PAPACY: ITS GROWTH AND ITS SUPPORTERS.

THE history of man, in its highest and truest aspect, is beyond doubt the history of his religion; and the historian who disregards this key-note of his work will scarcely atone for the fatal omission by the most varied learning and the most persevering labour. Political calculations, the enterprise of commerce, the development of art, may appear at times to swallow up all other desires and aims; but under this outer surface, the real current of human life will be showing constant signs of its existence and its power. Diverted, it may be, or repressed for a time by the force of circumstances, by conscious opposition or contemptuous neglect, it will be slowly gathering strength, until its stream bursts forth with greater impetuosity than ever. History, then, if it would discharge its highest functions, must in its records of every age bring out most

Importance of the history of religion

prominently the religious life of man; must, in tracing the course of modern civilisation, examine, at once carefully and widely, the influence and the workings of Christianity.

The history of Christianity.

Yet, on a superficial glance, the field is scarcely an inviting one. The gravest and most generous impartiality will admit that at best it exhibits but too often the most splendid promise with a miserable failure in its accomplishment, the most beneficent principles with the most injurious practice. And this inconsistency, which is but one phase among many in the view of more honest judges, fills up the whole horizon of narrower and more partial understandings. To such eyes a dark mist overspreads all, breaking only here and there to reveal fearful conflicts between antagonistic creeds and hostile institutions; the merciless cruelty of the orthodox conqueror, the excruciating torments of the heretical victim; the extirpation of human tenderness, the consecration of a boundless inhumanity. The implacable severity which found its victims alike in nations and individuals, which hunted out the Albigensian and the Lollard, the Jew and the Templar, which consumed in the same fires the heretical opponent of theological dogmas and the orthodox assailant of ecclesiastical corruption, spreads its dark and ghastly colouring over every page of Christian history.

It is no slight error which permits prejudices so narrow and fallacious to warp the mind into a feeling of indifference or contempt for what may seem mere records of ecclesiastical sins against justice and humanity. It is an infinitely graver error, when a writer suffers the feeling of indifference to pass into that of hatred, without an effort to determine the real character of that faith to which the title of Christianity rightfully belongs. The effects of the former error are in great measure neutralised by their silence; the latter has disfigured the splendid yet melancholy achievement of Gibbon. The judgment of charity may lead us to discern, scattered through this memorable work, signs of an artificial antagonism, of differences purposely heightened, of animosity designedly embittered; but, taking the standing ground of the historian of the Roman Empire, an impartial and philosophical mind must perceive that his method of treating the subject does not harmonise with all its phenomena, that it fails altogether of accounting for some. Admitting every instance of imposture and deception, repudiating every effort to advance the power of Christianity by violent means of whatever kind, we are still driven to confess that there must have been at work influences of a higher nature to explain adequately the advance not merely of human theories, but of human

Practical results of Christianity.

practice now, when contrasted both with theory and practice two thousand years ago.

Obscurity of its earlier history.

If there is something to sober, there is everything to console, us in this gradual leavening of human society; and the task of tracing out this growth and recording its several stages is one worthy of the highest mental powers and moral qualities. Entering the world silently and unfelt, with no claim to earthly power or any supremacy but that which was yielded to it by consent of the will, Christianity, in its earliest age, baffles our attempts entirely to determine its peculiar character. Many of its features it is impossible not to discern; but whether the professors of the new faith looked on themselves as members of the commonwealth in which they were placed, or withdrew, as a distinct society, from all polluting contact with the world—at what time they were separated from the ancient system to which at first they had exhibited no open antagonism—whether they looked to accomplish their mission by moulding men imperceptibly to their own standard, or by an avowed warfare against every system of law and polity which was contradictory to it—when and in what way this new influence made itself felt in the world of imperial Rome, then almost commensurate with the habitable world—all these, with many others, are questions which we can neither answer fully

nor determine with confidence.[1] Yet this society, so mysterious in its origin, so limited in its extent, has from that time to the present continued to be a manifest and sensible power influencing the destiny of man. Rising up slowly, and for a time almost unperceived, under the colossal shadow of Roman dominion, in the midst of effete religions, of a mythology in which few cared to place any belief, of philosophical systems which most felt to be but a poor substitute for the worn-out creeds; sometimes barely tolerated, sometimes (and that chiefly under the better emperors) oppressed and persecuted, it became in the space of three centuries too powerful for the master of the Roman world to confront as an enemy, too majestic to be otherwise than courted as an ally, if not reverenced as a teacher and a friend. Coextensive from that time forth with the wide circle of Roman supremacy, it found for itself a home in the hearts and minds of Europeans and Asiatics. Taking up their forms of thought, their systems of philosophy, their ideas of art and government, it shaped itself in some degree to their requirements, it moulded them in far greater degree to its own. It has sometimes asserted with fearless bravery its mission as the benefactor and saviour of mankind, it has stooped at others to be made use of as a machine

[1] Milman, *Latin Christianity*, book I. ch. i.

of political intrigue and tyranny. And not unfrequently, at one and the same time, it has seemed in the acts of synods and councils to make human duty synonymous with the acceptance of dogmatic propositions, while by its missions it has been drawing barbarous nations and savage clans within the borders of civilisation, and conferring upon them more than the highest temporal advantages.

Eastern and Western Christianity.

With all this inconsistency, perplexing only from a narrow and partial point of view, it has in its workings and its fortunes exhibited a marvellous correspondence with those of the people amongst whom it was set up. It has adhered in the East to one type unchanged and unchangeable; it has adopted in the West the traditions of Roman polity, or emerged with new strength amongst barbarous and ferocious hordes. It has betrayed the influence not only of philosophical systems, but of language and of art. It has been diverted by the luminous subtlety of Greek diction into speculations as fruitless as they were inexhaustible; it has devoted itself, in unison with Latin thought and expression, to the renovation and extension of the huge fabric of Roman dominion. And alike in the East and the West it has been confronted, from time to time, with forms of thought not belonging to old systems of government or

philosophy. It has been arrested by strange propositions, which professed to be drawn from its own theological decisions. It has been startled by ominous anticipations of conclusions with which the lapse of centuries and the changes of modern thought have rendered us familiar; and sometimes it has shown itself ready to sanction these conclusions, and to become the guide in the path of advancement and knowledge, while at others it has disavowed its own premises, and hunted out with implacable determination those to whom it had imparted the first impulse, and supplied fuel for their kindling zeal.

Its influence for good and evil.

Yet more: in the midst of these fluctuations (perhaps in consequence of them), in spite of all contradiction and inconsistency, it has at no time and scarcely in any place failed of effecting some good and uprooting some evil; it has at almost all times been the instrument of conveying incalculable blessings, and of checking the inroads of ignorance and barbarism. It has kept alive the very principles of justice and morality, at times when the wickedness of man seemed destined to extinguish them. Its influence has mitigated the horrors of warfare, has allayed feuds, at times when feuds and warfare were the great and paramount occupation of life. It has modified where it could not change: it has alleviated the bitterness of the yoke where

it could not remove the burden. It has confronted dangers the most opposite, contingencies the most varied; has exhibited the image of calm majesty, of mild and serene greatness, while all besides it seemed plunging into a chaos of anarchy and violence. From these, the phenomena of its history, it remains to draw the legitimate inferences: and he who would approach them with the determination to find support for particular systems, and the evidence of unchangeable institutions, may, by dint of learning or ingenuity, find something to justify every proposition and uphold every system; but he will find much more to perplex and bewilder him. As he who enters the fabled hall of Eblis must bid farewell to hope, so he who would judge in this way of Christian history, must resign his title to a calm and tranquil impartiality. He must yield up the first qualification of a historian before he enters upon his office. For his aim is to maintain principles which admit of no exceptions, and to which the admission of any exception must in strictness of speech be fatal. Disguise it therefore from himself as he may, he will be under the influence of an irresistible temptation to warp facts or to colour them, to impute evil motives to good men, and right motives to bad men. His sympathies will be unduly excited on one side, while they will be as unduly repressed on the

other. He will refuse to discover the evil in Gregory the Great, or Hildebrand, or Innocent III., the good in Henry IV., or Frederic II., or Sigismund. There will be the same perplexity and the same temptation to unfairness, for those who would find in the same facts the evidence of strong anti-sacerdotal prejudices, for a religion of sentimental spiritualism, for systems which have their beginning and their ending in an inert self-contemplation. But the temptation to which either of these may be subject is as nothing when compared with that of others, who start with denying the existence of all spiritual and moral influences, and handle the records of Christian times with the determination of eliciting from them the refutation of all Christian principles. As the religious history of man involves in fact his whole history, so that of Latin Christianity is virtually the history of Christianity throughout the world.

Aggressive character of Latin Christianity.

It is the record of every wonderful change which has befallen the speculative East and the practical and politic West. It brings before us the several forms of sacerdotal religion; controversies on subjects which transcend human comprehension, and others which must arise out of every system even of moral philosophy; controversies respecting the constitution of the Divine Nature; con-

troversies on the causes and motives of human actions, on the essential distinctions of matter and spirit, of good and evil. We must watch the struggles of conflicting ideas, borrowed, some from the mystic antimaterialism of Zoroaster, some from the bewildering physical science of Egypt; we must look on the battle between monasticism and every feeling, impulse, and affection of our common humanity; on the further struggle of Eastern monachism, not only against human appetites and passions, but against almost every exercise of the mind and intellect. We must see the Eastern Church contenting itself with endless quarrels for the meaning of a word, while the Western is being assailed by savage armies, and in turn taking captive its conquerors. We must behold the patriarch of Constantinople the toy and puppet of orthodox and heretic emperors, while the haughty Vicar of the Prince of the Apostles is setting his feet upon the necks of kings. We must see the missionaries of Rome reaping in their harvest from the chilly climes of England and Germany, of Bohemia and Friesland, while the sword of Abu Bekr and of Omar flashes amidst the myrtle groves of Damascus, and the standard of the prophet floats above the hallowed shrine of Mount Zion. We must survey centuries of wild and violent enthusiasm, of turbulence which threatened all society with one

common ruin, finding its vent in those strange adventures which identified physical recklessness or bravery with personal holiness. Bursting forth in the first outbreak of resistless fanaticism, we must see the hosts of the Crusaders borne with a singleness of purpose not unworthy of admiration against the oppressor of Christendom, the Caliph of the false prophet, the polluter of the Holy Places. Then, as in each succeeding age the fire of religious zeal becomes less and less fierce, each new crusade will betray something more of cool design or double-minded calculations, until that becomes a system which was first evoked by a fiery and irresistible impulse. The sword will become the one argument for the settlement of all differences. A crusade against the heretic will confer the same sanctity with a crusade against the infidel; and the name of De Montfort will be held not less illustrious than that of Godfrey or Tancred or St. Louis.

The Latin schoolmen.

From this turmoil of arms and warfare we must pass to the scarcely less vehement tumults of the schools of Western Christendom, those marvellous abodes of indomitable human perseverance, of boundless if misdirected and barren learning. We must look upon the astounding monuments of gigantic labour left in their pyramids of tomes on the whole circle of human knowledge, in which every subject of

thought is analysed with the most searching anatomy and a systematic precision which seems to clear up every perplexity while in fact it removes none. We must see these schools invaded by the Dominican and Franciscan, and the mightiest masters surpassed in their highest dialectical subtleties by the members of this new papal army which professed at first to despise the intellect as much as they professed to despise money; we must see them rendered illustrious by the rivalry of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, of Albert the Great, of William of Ockham, and Alexander Hales.

Mighty, indeed, is the array of names memorable and familiar which in the history of Latin Christianity must pass before us—among the champions of monasticism the names of Jerome and Gregory, of Benedict and Bernard and Peter Damiani, of Dominic and Francis. In the strife of sacerdotal preeminence we must see the representative of Charlemagne humbled before the bowed and drooping form of Hildebrand, and the magnificent Frederic II. urging a scarcely effectual warfare against the pope, who, as fame avers, beheld a hundred winters. We must see the haughty Philip Augustus and the dastardly John of England, the Kings of Arragon and Navarre, trembling at the behests of Innocent III., or resisting in vain the material

The champions and enemies of the popes.

and spiritual weapons of papal warfare. Simon de Montfort and Raymond of Toulouse, Thomas of Canterbury and Stephen Langton, Frederic Barbarossa and Conrad the last of the line of Hohenstaufen, John Huss and his betrayer the Emperor Sigismund, Philip the Fair and his victim Du Molay the last Grand Master of the Templars, Berengar and Abelard, Petrarch, Rienzi, Dante—names great for their success or their misfortunes, for their sanctity or their crimes—names illustrious in the annals of scholastic theology, of science and art, in poetry and painting—names celebrated for achievements alike gigantic and useless, or for works of beneficence deserving endless gratitude—all in their several times and places pass across the historic scene, each with their several associations, grouped amidst those for whom they toiled and suffered, whom they protected or tormented, and to whom they were a blessing or a curse.

If this history furnishes evidence, the clearest and the most forcible, for the divine origin and the sacred mission of Christianity itself, it exhibits none for papal claims and hierarchical pretensions, none for systems which would limit Christianity to the rigid acceptance of dogmatical propositions.[1] In the papacy we see a

Growth of the papacy.

[1] It was the happiest omen for the future history, not only of literature, but of thought and religion, when Dean Milman

power, rising gradually to importance, from an insignificance necessary not only for its growth but its existence, favoured also by circumstances both at home and abroad, and unquestionably for the most beneficent ends—a power kept alive at first by the intellectual or practical vigour of its possessors, then gathering strength from controversies and feuds, from factions and schisms elsewhere, from the rivalry of contending patriarchates and the struggles of hostile sovereigns—a power rising to pre-eminence from dangers which seemed to prelude its utter overthrow, and rendered at once predominant by the withdrawal of that imperial splendour, the accession of which was the death-blow to the ecclesiastical greatness of new Rome. In the history of the popes is seen the wonderful sight of power consolidated by the desertion of their temporal masters and the invasions of hostile chieftains, by the inroads of Alaric and the devastations of Vandals and Lombards, by the rule of Odoacer and Theodoric. We

began his great task with the following declaration: 'I presume not, neither is it the office of the historian, to limit the blessings of our religion either in this world or in the world to come. "There is One who will know His own." As a historian, I can disfranchise none who claim, even upon the slightest grounds, the privileges and hopes of Christianity; repudiate none who do not place themselves without the pale of believers and worshippers of Christ, or of God through Christ.'

see them amid these and other perils pursuing their onward course, sometimes by the mere force of moral influence achieving their greatest and worthiest triumphs; more often grasping after extended dominion by deliberate political calculations: sometimes defeated, generally successful; preferring perhaps to avail themselves of fair means, yet not altogether averse from resorting to foul ones; waiting tranquilly until vague and ill-defined claims became, through the neglect or the impotence of civil rulers, strong precedents for rigidly defined principles.[1] And in their greatness are seen also the elements of their weakness and degradation. Checked in its strides towards universal supremacy by the opposition of foreign rulers, and even more by the traditionary Roman ideas which still animated the populace of the Seven Hills, the papacy was constrained to assume the character of a temporal power, in order to maintain its ascendency at home. Then followed all the inconsistency and tergiversation, all the

[1] This far-seeing patience was perhaps never more strikingly exhibited than in the relations of Hildebrand with William the Conqueror. Hildebrand probably knew that from William himself it was vain to look for submission. But he was content to bide his time, well knowing that the seed which he was sowing would yield its fruits hereafter; and the harvest was ready in the days of Innocent III. 'The appeal of William to the Papal Court created a precedent by which the Papal Court might claim the disposal of all the crowns in Christendom.'—Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, vol. iii. p. 320.

fluctuations and confusion of a complicated and tortuous policy; the balancing of hostile states, the playing off of one faction against another, the unscrupulousness which turned the arms of the infidel against the refractory nobles or the turbulent populace of Rome, the worldliness and trickery which sometimes gained its object, yet not unfrequently exposed it to humiliation and contempt.

The personal character of the popes.

In the men who wielded this power at one time so majestic, at another so despicable, so lofty or so degraded, so feared or so despised, are seen all the differences which correspond to, rather which were, in whatever degree, the causes of these vicissitudes. Among them appear names which slander has never aspersed with the imputation of unworthy motives—Innocent I., Gregory the Great, the first and the ninth Leos; others in whom the profession of the same high motives would seem to have been in some degree the result of self-deception, possibly hypocrisy—the names of Hildebrand and Alexander III.; others, like Innocent III., who followed out a mistaken theory with greater conscientiousness than power, with greater facilities for tormenting mankind than for devising remedies for evils already committed. Nor are there wanting phases of their history more melancholy and more repulsive. Some have spread the flames of war over the fairest regions of the

earth; some lived as bandits rather than men of peace and honesty. The Papacy has passed through more than one dark age. The infamy of the son of Theodora in the tenth century is well matched by the infamy of John XXIII. in the fifteenth. Rescued by the stern integrity of the German popes from the depths of ignominy into which it had sunk under the minions of Theodora and Marozia, it reached its highest splendours during the age from the pontificate of Gregory VII. to that of the successor of Innocent III. Then followed the time of boundless pretensions, urged by men deficient in moral greatness, the turbulent violence of Innocent IV. (the Genoese Sinibald Fiesco), of Boniface VIII., better known, perhaps, under his former name of Benedetto Gaetani. And then in the Courts of Lyons and Avignon was presented the spectacle of Roman popes, self-banished from their own metropolitan city, reduced to every species of chicanery in order to escape from the toils in which they were caught, —of successors of St. Peter unable to retain their own patrimony, yet revelling in dissolute luxury in a foreign land, and leaving behind them vast treasures at which the world stood astonished. In this 'seventy years' banishment,' while the miserable Clement V. sacrificed the most splendid order of Christian chivalry to the avarice or the fears of the French King, and yet scarcely succeeded

by this sacrifice in shielding from his attacks the memory of his predecessor, there was growing up in the court of Avignon an unbelief more complete, a contempt of all religion and all restraint, altogether deeper than any which was so mercilessly punished in others.

With this array of popes varying from each other in all possible degrees of integrity and iniquity, there is, in truth, no need to enter into the formal examination of more recent pretensions and developments. There is no need to assert in so many words that the Pope was not infallible—either personally, with the lives of John X. and his execrable fraternity before us—or officially, when we see them sometimes accused of heresy;[1] sometimes compelled to appeal to a general council; sometimes shrinking from or repudiated by those councils; sometimes deposed by them. There is no need to refute the idea of an infallible guidance in matters of faith, with the spectacle of East and West divided, with council anathematising council, and popes and patriarchs launching their spiritual thunderbolts against each other. Still less is there any need to advert to fallacies so transparent as those which rest the

Inferences respecting their infallibility.

[1] This is patent in the case of Honorius. The complete failure of all modern efforts to clear him from the charges and from actual participation in heresy may be seen in the work recently published by Mr. Renouf, *The Case of Pope Honorius Reconsidered with reference to recent Apologies.*

papal claims on the possession of moral power, when that which they have possessed or exercised has been so frequently used to desolate the earth instead of furthering the kingdom of peace; when the offenders against the first principles of all law have been suffered to escape unpunished and unnoticed, and the rebel against canons and councils has been thrust into the dungeon or consigned to the stake; when it has hunted out offences against a remote consanguinity or spiritual relationship, and left license and profligacy unchecked and unreproved; when it has placed under the ban of its excommunication the most enlightened of statesmen, the most judicious and clear-sighted of rulers, and taken into its special favour miscreants dead to all sense of mercy and humanity. Evidence such as this, abounding as it does throughout the whole annals of the Papacy and of Christendom, it would be superfluous to strengthen by seeking for obscure early intimations of protests against papal pretensions, for ancient signs of suspicion and repudiation of Roman supremacy, for decrees of councils which professed their own independence. It would be vain to attempt to overthrow it by referring to tomes of decretals (were they as genuine as they are false), by citing the most ancient precedents, by appeals to the gravest canons,—vain to rest on the promises of Scrip-

ture, or on that prior ground of the want which it is alleged that men must feel for an unerring guidance in the province of faith.

The temptation to look for analogies is neither weak nor unfrequent, nor is it one which may with safety be generally indulged. Yet it would have appeared perhaps a strange thing, had the old traditionary ideas of republican and imperial Rome died away as soon as the old religion was supplanted by Christianity. It would have been still more strange had the transference of the seat of empire from the Seven Hills of Rome to those of Byzantium been followed by no adaptation of those old ideas to altered circumstances. No longer might Rome hope to preserve her proudest title of *caput orbis terrarum* by the strength of her legions and the victories of her generals in every quarter of the world; but the very absence of temporal greatness might suggest empire of another kind,—an empire more universal, a dominion more permanent, over the intellects and the hearts of men. So long, however, as the old heathen creeds retained any real power and could rouse the arm of the civil ruler in their defence, such an idea must be purely visionary: nor is there the slightest sign that during that period it was either entertained by, or had even suggested itself to, the minds of the bishops of Rome. Till

Influence of traditionary Roman ideas on the Papacy.

the time for their greater prominence had come, they continued happy in their insignificance. Nor was it for a brief period that Christianity in Rome, and elsewhere in the West, remained Greek and not Roman. Its theology and ritual were alike Greek; nor was it till the age of Tertullian that Latin Christianity could lay claim to anything like a popular literature. And here manifestly is furnished the explanation for the singular fact mentioned by Sozomen, that for a long time after the introduction of Christianity there was no public preaching in Rome.[1]

Still, although the want of unity in language, probably also the want of vigour in the bishops themselves, prevented any premature developements, the Roman Church could not but have, from its situation, a sensible influence over all others. Rome was still, before the transference of the empire to the shores of the Bosporos, the centre of the civil and commercial world. To it flowed the trade and the enterprise of all nations, and with these were imported every new theory, every fresh schism and heresy. Thither came those who had fallen under suspicion of departing from the faith, thither appealed those who had accused them of corrupting the doctrine of Christ. Received by all these as the words of an arbiter, if not a judge, the decisions of the Bishop of Rome were eagerly courted, and some-

The see of Rome.

[1] Milman, *Latin Christianity*, book I. ch. i. and iv. (i. 28, 170.)

times admitted by more than those in whose favour they were given. Yet the importance thus acquired was not sufficient to overbear all opposition, or even to create any sort of readiness to admit an inherent supremacy. Irenæus could rebuke Pope Victor for his severe language on the subject of the Paschal controversy, Hippolytus oppose Zephyrinus through his whole pontificate, and accuse of heresy and injustice his successor Callistus. Cyprian's theory of Roman precedence (founded as it was on the material greatness of Rome or on the unity of the Church, and based on the notion not of papal but episcopal power) did not withhold him from presiding over a council which rejected the interference of the Pope and denied his right to the title of Bishop of Bishops.

During this period the course of events was paving the way for the separation of Latin from Eastern Christianity as a distinct cognisable whole. In the West it was identifying itself more and more with the language of old Rome, and separating itself from Greek forms of thought, Greek feeling, and Greek theology. In the second century Latin sermons were impracticable from the immense majority of Christians who spoke Greek. In the fourth century, Athanasius is constrained, during three years' sojourn at Rome, to master the Latin language before he can venture to appear before

The Roman Church originally Greek.

the Pope with any confidence of being able to explain the subtle distinctions of the Trinitarian controversy.

But the popes were again favoured by their distance from the actual scene of this and the other early controversies. At the several eastern councils in which the Pope interfered at all, he was represented by his deputies. His absence enhanced his dignity, while it saved him from the unseemly turmoils which frequently disgraced those councils, and from being hastily committed in person to decisions which, when given by others, he might, if need were, repudiate. Yet before the Papacy could emerge to something like its subsequent importance, it had to pass through a dark and discouraging ordeal. The persecution of Liberius by Constantius for his resolute defence of the great champion of the Trinitarian controversy; the intrusion of the Anti-pope Felix into his see; the fearful and bloody factions, which polluted the streets of Rome in the strife between Damasus and Ursicinus, could have left men but little time to anticipate the day when emperors would tremble at the behests of their successors.

Absence of the Popes from the Eastern Councils.

A.D. 356.

A.D. 367.

Yet the danger was not so great, the crisis not so momentous, as it seemed to be. The dark cloud passed away, and Rome found herself advancing rapidly to spiritual dominion, and that from influences not altogether

The spiritual monarchy.

proceeding from herself. In the minds of Augustine, of Jerome, and of Ambrose, the magnificent idea of a spiritual monarchy, — of a theocracy with a visible hierarchy analogous to the subordination of angelic dignities, — had already received shape. In their writings it was given to the world. Probably before none of them, certainly not before Augustine, rose the image of the historical papacy of a later day. His city of God embraced not earth alone, but heaven. It had no mixture of worldly policy, it knew nothing of reliance on secular power. But the less definite outlines of this Divine kingdom upon earth harmonised well with the old ideas of Roman sovereignty, long dormant, but never altogether extinguished.

The elements of confusion and violence were at work both in the East and West—confusion in the former from contending religious factions, in the latter from the disruption of the old society by the inroads of barbarians. Amidst scenes of tumult and terror, Chrysostom, the world-famed orator, the dauntless reprover of royal license and popular corruption, had been driven from his patriarchal throne. Before the Bishop of Rome, Innocent (not less deserving than any other of the name of Great), he laid his appeal for a general council to judge between him and his intruding rival. That appeal availed

Inno-cent I.

A.D. 404.

not to win back for him the throne which he had lost; but a great accession of moral influence was the reward of the Pope for his steadfast maintenance of a righteous cause. Innocent had deplored the scenes of reckless anarchy in the streets and churches of Constantinople: he was now to witness the repeated inroads of the terrible Alaric with his savage Goths, the last struggle of pagan Rome with the destined instruments of its downfall. Twice repelled by the arms of Stilicho, for the third time, when Stilicho had fallen a victim to the infatuated frenzy of Honorius, the hosts of Alaric battered the walls of Rome, and were averted from their prey, not probably without the intervention of Innocent, at the price of a costly ransom. Master of the city of the Cæsars, he set up and dethroned one on whom he bestowed their empty title; and then again summoning his hordes to the onset, let loose his legions for the final pillage of A.D. 410. pagan Rome. By a happy fortune, Innocent was at Ravenna, on a vain mission to obtain succour from the powerless Emperor for the beleaguered city. The head of Western Christendom was not to witness her dying splendours extinguished in flames and blood. The invader himself, it is said, was swayed by some strange influence towards the Christians. Against their persons and substance he forbade all violence; their churches he

protected from desecration; only the worshippers of the ancient gods were abandoned to the swords and the license of his soldiery. Before the return of the Pope, pagan Rome had virtually ceased to exist. The forum, with its gorgeous temples which inspired the triumphant eulogies of Claudian on the victories of Stilicho, had lost its ancient majesty; the spell of the tutelar gods was broken. Palaces lay deserted, temples were left to decay. Rome was to spring from her ashes, Christian in her faith, in her art, and in her government; and in place of the old shrines and the old priesthood,—the pontiffs, and the flamens, and the augurs,—were to arise the temples of the Christian faith with their more magnificent hierarchy. The successor of the Galilean fisherman had inherited more than all their ancient sacerdotal dignity, more than the barren pomp of the titles of the old republic. Caring little for high-sounding names, he had attained a more solid power; he was now on the road to universal empire.

Leo the Great, A.D. 440.

Twenty years later, the papal throne was filled by a worthy representative of Innocent I. Like him Leo the Great had to arbitrate in Eastern controversy, like him to witness the inroads of barbarians, yet with greater success to draw off the invader from the gates of Rome. The heresies of Nestorius and of Eutyches, the

violence of consequent contending factions, continued to hold the Eastern Church under the same miserable spell of discord and anarchy. But it was well for the dignity of the chief of Western Christendom, that mountains and seas separated him from this strife of tongues and of weapons yet more destructive; that the mystery of absence was thrown around his arbitration between combatants who (whatever their intellectual powers) alike disgraced their common Christianity; well, again, that they presided not over these councils at this stage of their career. To appear like Urban II. in such an assembly rather to direct a popular impulse than to decide theological controversy, might add to their dignity and influence; but for such councils generally the popes exhibited no special predilection, and sometimes (not unreasonably) sought to elude or prevent them. It was not on this soil that papal claims could find the most genial nourishment; and the Councils of Constance and of Basle were regarded with aversion and dread by popes differing so greatly in character as John XXIII. and Martin V. A.D. 1095.

It was a happy fortune, therefore, which prevented the Pope from being personally concerned in the rival and hostile assemblies which both claimed the title of the First General Council of Ephesus; from being called upon to rebuke the violent and indecent Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, A.D. 431.

haste of Cyril, and the not less unseemly and injudicious anathemas of John of Antioch. In the more dignified assemblage convoked as the Second Council of Chalcedon, Leo learnt with satisfaction that his letters had been decisive against the here- A.D. 451. tical Eutyches,—with irritation, that his primacy had been admitted not on the ground of descent from St. Peter, but as the bishopric of the Imperial city. It remained for him to repudiate this canon, and rebuke the arrogance of the patriarch of Constantinople for aspiring to a co-ordinate dignity with the Roman pontiff.

But Leo had to confront other antagonists. The Huns of Attila were encamped on the shores of the lake Benacus. Leo went forth at the head of the ambassadors of Rome, and averted the storm from the devoted city. The populace of Rome had not yet lost all traces of their faith in the divination and mythology of old times. They attributed their deliverance to the stars, and thronged to the Circensian games. Five years sufficed to bring against them a less A.D. 456. placable enemy; and again Leo went forth to plead before Genseric the cause of his defenceless fellow-citizens. Some mitigation of the lot of conquered cities he did indeed obtain: those only who offered resistance might be killed, the captives should not be tortured or the buildings burnt. But beyond this the arm of the Vandal

Attila and Genseric.

could not be arrested; and the few relics of heathenism, the statues which had been suffered to decorate the capitol after the pillage by Alaric, now fell into his hand and were carried away as trophies. The last links were broken between Christian and Pagan Rome. The ship which was bearing her gods to Carthage foundered at sea.

Thus far the papal supremacy, such as it was, had been for the most part gained by legitimate means and exercised for beneficial purposes. The great idea of unlimited dominion which had first been conceived in its completeness by the comprehensive mind of Innocent I., had made no slight advance towards its realisation under Leo the Great. But in this idea the notion of temporal supremacy was altogether subordinate. The empire, aimed at thus far, resembled rather the fairer vision which rose before the mind of Augustine. But if they saw the possibility of realising their idea, they could not foresee the force of circumstances in modifying or distorting it. Doubtless the moral influence of the popes was beginning more and more to influence the civil relations of Rome. It was the only power which then existed in the freshness of its early vigour. The empire of the West, already little more than nominal, was waning rapidly away. But long before the Papacy could appear as a temporal power, it must exhibit strange

Moral influence of the Popes.

fluctuations and pass through more than one period of depression, apparently of decay. The
A.D. 476 or 479. resignation of Augustulus,[1] which by the pompous pride of the Roman senate was interpreted into an assertion of the reunion of East and West under one emperor, is an event almost unnoticed in the Papal epistles. The popes are busied with intrigues in the East, in battling with the pretensions of the patriarch of Constantinople to parity of honour with the see of Rome. Yet the substitution of the real empire of Odoacer for the empty sovereignty of Augustulus had a directly practical bearing of far greater moment than they had conceived. But the full consequences of this subjection were scarcely
A.D. 563. felt till the victories of Justinian had temporarily reunited the East and West under a single sceptre.

Before these events one interruption had occurred in the monotonous controversies of the
The Henoticon of Zeno, A.D. 482. Eastern Church. It came in the shape of an exhortation to peace, not from the spiritual but the civil power. The Henoticon of Zeno would have mitigated the acrimony of contending factions by removing the causes and objects of their discord. But the combatants were not to be separated; and the vain attempt to bring about toleration ended in a schism between

[1] Gibbon, ch. xxxvi.

the two great divisions of Christendom which lasted for forty years. The Henoticon, like some other pieces of legislation and expressions of individual opinion, was both out of time and out of place. Like the Peace of the Empire proclaimed by Henry IV., like the premature civilisation of the Sicilian court of Frederic II., it spoke to men with whom forbearance and moderation were synonymous with absolute apostasy from all faith. Yet as indicating the course which should at a future time guide even public opinion, as showing an appreciation of the principles of all fair dealing, every such act and declaration must be welcomed with a hearty satisfaction. They are indeed but few, and visible only here and there in the dreary waste of theological hatred, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness; they come from men whose words and actions have at other times miserably contradicted these better impulses. But they are not the less treasured up as genuine utterances of the unwarped human heart. 'To pretend to a dominion over the conscience is to usurp the prerogative of God. By the nature of things the power of sovereigns is confined to political government. They have no right of punishment but over those who disturb the public peace. The most dangerous heresy is that of a sovereign who separates himself from part of his subjects, because they believe not according to his belief.' These may

well be termed golden words, but they come (it is A.D. 526. hardly too strong a phrase) from the murderer of Boëthius. Thoughts not unlike these we may find in the early national poetry of Teutonic Christendom, the practice of them may be seen in some measure in states founded on commercial rather than warlike enterprise,—in the rude strains of Cædmon and the tolerant policy of Venice. Almost in one solitary instance does an ecclesiastic stand forth to bear the same righteous testimony. In that council to A.D. 1416. which John Huss and Jerome of Prague fell victims, Robert Hallam, bishop of Salisbury, stood almost alone in repudiating the punishment of death for heresy,—the more singular in his charity when even that victim whom Bohemia reverenced as her holiest martyr felt constrained to admit that the heretic who after fair, mild, and patient instructions persisted in his error, was to be punished, according to St. Augustine, in the body. The interval is great between the days of Theodoric and of Sigismund; but in both such protests enable us to realise more fully the mighty despotism which the doctrine of persecution exercised over the minds of men.

Thus far the popes had carefully avoided endangering their power or diminishing their dignity by attending even the gravest councils of the Church. They had now fallen upon darker days; and Theodoric compelled

Depression of the Papacy, A.D. 523.

the successor of Hormisdas to go as his ambassador to Constantinople on the involuntary errand of toleration for the Arians and other heretics. Twelve years afterwards Theodotus, the unworthy A.D. 535. kinsman and representative of Theodoric, also sent the Pope Agapetus as his ambassador, rather to the advantage of the Pope than his own. Theodotus in his terror sought, by persuasion or threat, to avert the victorious arms of Justinian, or rather of his resistless generals. Agapetus found means to overawe the cowardly tyrant, to obtain the degradation of one patriarch and to consecrate another. After this temporary victory the Papacy sunk deeper still. The names of Silverius and Vigilius, of Justinian and Theodora, recur again and again as the prominent agents or victims in that dismal drama of treachery, banishment, and murder, which shows how completely the Papacy was shorn of its strength when removed from its own metropolitan city or involved in the intrigues and subjected to the caprice of a foreign court. Had the Gothic kingdom been firmly established and Italy welded under the successors of Theodoric into a coherent state, no room would have been left for that miserable policy to which the popes have from that time pertinaciously adhered, until in our own day it has undergone a defeat which threatens to be final. In the supposed interests of their spiritual power the popes have steadily

set their face against the union of Italy under one dominion; and looking at the results, Dean Milman may well say, 'Whatever it may have been to Christendom, the Papacy has been the eternal, implacable foe of Italian independence and Italian unity, and so (as far as independence and unity might have given dignity, political weight, and prosperity) to the welfare of Italy.' [1]

Nor were these the only humiliations to which the Roman pontiffs were compelled to submit.

The code of Justinian. A.D. 528–534.

The vast code of Justinian invaded without scruple their spiritual province: it knew nothing, in fact, of their pretensions. To the moral, still more to the Christian philosopher, this gigantic fabric of jurisprudence presents subjects of paramount interest and importance. Professedly a Christian code, and asserting explicitly the orthodoxy of its theology, it stands forth as perhaps the surest test for measuring the influence hitherto exercised by Christianity upon the world. Its decisions with regard to the marital and parental relations, and the still more momentous subject of slavery, may not only throw a more valuable light on the method of its working, but furnish grounds for auguring the course of its future influence on the forms of thought and the destinies of mankind. To the historian of the Papacy it is no less the criterion by which we may

[1] *Latin Christianity*, book III. ch. iv.

measure the degree of power to which the Roman pontiffs had attained. The emanation of all authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, from the temporal sovereign, was the first principle of Justinian's legislation. Recognising the primacy of the See of St. Peter, and insisting, in accordance with the centralising ideas of old Roman law, on the union of all churches in submission to Rome, it determines the limits of that pre-eminence and the boundaries of its jurisdiction. The head of Roman Christendom is the subject of the Roman emperor. He must bow before the imperial decrees; he must, if called upon, publish them in all his churches. The Papacy owed its subsequent aggrandisement chiefly to those circumstances which concurred to keep the Roman civil law in the background, and for a time almost to conceal its existence. The aim of Justinian was to legislate for the empire at a time when it professed once more to be commensurate with the world. When, through its inherent weakness and the encroachments of Mahomedanism, the unstable fabric was again broken, Western Christendom was too soon involved in relations with Teutonic races to leave the Roman civil law much hold on the popular mind. The legislation of the great Karl[1] contained indeed enactments no less opposed to ecclesiastical pretensions than those of Justinian.

[1] Milman, *Latin Christianity*, book v. ch. i.

But his munificent donation, while it was reason enough for the Roman pontiff to keep silence, laid the foundations of a substantial power which might be effectually wielded against a ruler of less comprehensive and vigorous mind. This legacy of material power continued in the hands of the popes to put out of sight absolute theories of civil supremacy, until these again found the most determined champions in the civil lawyers of Paris. The Papacy had almost beaten down the resistance of Teutonic sovereigns, when these men raised up a more formidable foe in the great code of Roman law. Amidst the subtle theories of the schoolmen and the bold assertions of the canon lawyers, the steadiness with which they ignored the one, the boldness with which they appealed to decisions and enactments older than the other, afforded the most incontestable evidence of the reawakening of the human intellect.

Gregory the Great, A.D. 587–604.

That the principles of Justinian's ecclesiastical legislation should retain their force in the West during the times of Gregory the Great, was a manifest impossibility. The conquests of Odoacer left, even if they did not find, the country in an indescribable condition of desolation and misery. The cultivation of the land had in many districts wholly ceased. Famine and disease had in some places almost extirpated the population. Against these causes of weakness

his own rule effected but little; even that of Theodoric perhaps not much more. In Rome itself poverty and epidemics had completely prostrated the popular spirit; the hands of the temporal power were paralysed. There was no hope whether for internal order or external defence except in the wisdom and fortitude of its bishop. The defenceless city again trembled at invaders whom rumour described as more terrible than any who had preceded them. That peace which Innocent had by his mediation sought to accomplish with Alaric, and Leo with Attila and Genseric, Gregory essayed as bravely and more successfully to obtain from the detested Lombards. The arms of the invaders were arrested, and the invaders themselves converted from a questionable heresy to orthodox Christianity. Gregory had conquered, but by means for which he needed not to blush. He had acquired temporal power, but it had been thrust upon him rather than sought by him. A feeling of complacency might be pardoned for the consciousness that his elevation had been brought about by no acts which could disgrace a Christian prelate.

His life and character.

The facts of Gregory's life exhibit so fine a sense of equity and generosity, with so many instances of perversion scarcely to be called less than iniquitous, so judicious an application of means to ends, so keen a discrimination

between the shadow of power and the substance, a learning so profound yet so narrow and bigoted, —that we at once see in him the type and the product of his age. The same man who had saved Rome from all the miseries of war and famine, who had bestowed on it the blessing of a firm and legitimate government, whose wide sympathy conferred on distant northern countries the still higher blessing of Christianity, who shielded Jews from exaction and oppression, who by the sale of consecrated vessels from the altar for the redemption of captives had shown that the substance of religion was with him of greater moment than its form,—is found to triumph with unrestrained exultation over the slaughter of a sovereign who, if he had treated him with indifference, had at least been the benefactor of his people; to eulogise in the most fulsome terms, and to invest with the highest sanctity, one of the most execrable murderers that ever usurped a throne.

Sacerdotalism and monachism.

The answer to all this terrible inconsistency is to be found in the facts that Gregory was both a churchman and a monk. It is impossible to understand the Middle Ages without understanding the character of such a man as Gregory. It is impossible to judge rightly of him without examining the several influences involved in the ideas of sacerdotalism and

monachism. Wide as were the differences between Eastern and Latin Christianity, greatly as they were opposed to each other in spirit and developement, almost all these very varieties have for their groundwork the assumption (tacit or explicit) of one dominant and all-pervading principle. Already underlying the religious life of the East, and showing some signs of its influence on the West, this idea struck its deepest roots and gained its highest power in and by the writings of Augustine and of Jerome. But in the East it was chiefly practice, in the West chiefly theology, which was affected by this principle. Tempted by its inexhaustible subtlety, Eastern thought revelled in endless disquisitions on the nature of Divine existence. The relations of the Three Persons of the Trinity, the mysteries of the Incarnation, of the Divine and Human natures in Christ, were debated and defined in Greek with that copiousness the want of which an Eastern theologian bitterly deplored in the Latin. These controversies were indeed imported into the West: they found something like a congenial soil in Spain and Southern France; but they presented no great general attraction for the Western mind. The Roman Church was in reference to them the patient scholar of the great lights of Eastern orthodoxy. Still if the West regarded these controversies with comparative indifference, there

were others into which it threw itself with the keenest appetite, and which were peculiarly its own. In it Manicheeism fastened on the subject of the human will, which it had failed to affect in the East. In its practical recognition of the principle which was common to Manicheeism, Gnosticism, and Orientalism generally, in aiming at the utter extinction of human affection, in regarding the body as a polluted prison-house, and its sustenance as a disgraceful necessity, in waging war with everything that might elevate and adorn life, —no system could surpass the monasticism of the East. Its hermits who macerated their withered frames in caves and dens, its saints who on the summit of pillars practised their austerities to the admiring awe of surrounding multitudes, may fully rival the most ingenious torments devised by the wildest devotees of India. But these very torments, this very self-abnegation or self-extinction, exhibited the grandest effort of their free will. It was that phase of Manicheeism which, asserting the corruption of matter, asserts also the power of the soul to abstract itself from it, and after its triumphant struggle to claim, as a right, its reward from that spirit with which it has identified itself. Whether or not the theory was a practical deification of the human will, whether it repudiated the necessity of Divine Grace, in compelling the Deity to accept the voluntary victim,—

these were points which the fervid recluse of the East never paused, perhaps never cared, to examine. With him the principle of Manicheeism became a passion. He plunged into a deadly strife with all natural affections; he surrendered himself impetuously to a wrapt and mystic contemplation; he crushed with indiscriminate determination his body, his soul, and his intellect. Separation from mankind, with alternating reveries and tortures, was the one end and aim of his existence; and the monks of the East consequently failed to exercise any influence by the more commanding powers of the heart and mind. If they mingled at all in worldly affairs, it was as a furious rabble with passions rendered utterly malignant by a coarse and narrow fanaticism. The learning and the eloquence of the Benedictine, the impassioned rhetoric and consummate science of the Dominican and Franciscan, were no objects for emulation to the grovelling asceticism of the East.

The theology of Augustine.

But from these conclusions, which implicitly denied the reality and absolute necessity of Divine Grace to determine human action for good, the mind of Augustine shrank with a concentrated aversion. He had zealously taken up the whole Manichean philosophy. He had weighed its theories in a balance, and, as he thought, found them all wanting. One, however,

(and that which lay at the root of the whole system, and of systems so far differing as those of the Gnostics and the Arians, of Nestorius and of Eutyches,) continued to exercise over him a power more intense and despotic than before. He had cast aside their dualistic tenets, with all those which converted the Redeemer of man into a phantom, and his passion into a fiction; but his unshaken conviction of the impurity of matter threw him back with increasing force on the grace of God as the one motive power to good in the heart of man. Between the latter and this direct working of the Divine Spirit on his individual being, this immediate inspiration, nothing must be suffered to intervene. If from the prison-house of corruption in which men found themselves, any emerged to light and safety, it was the direct act of God, and, as such, foreknown in His eternal counsels, irresistible, irreversible. This position, with its terrific converse, became, with him, the foundation of his whole theology, and on it was built up, not only the monasticism, but also the sacerdotalism, of the West. The separation of the soul and body from surrounding temptations and the natural relations of society was the one path which could warrant the entertainment of any hope of future safety. His theory was not, indeed, consistent on all points; and that such a man as Augustine could either be

unconscious of or disregard this inconsistency, shows the unbending determination of his will, the predominant influence of passion over judgment. To the Roman Church, with its traditional monarchical ideas and the systematic ritualism of its faith, the theology of Augustine was especially congenial and peculiarly welcome. The world was a mass of evil; if any should be delivered from it, the fact was in each case eternally predetermined in the Divine Mind. But this conclusion, so terrifying when stated thus nakedly, became full of consolation, when the circle of Divine Mercy was declared to be coextensive with that of the Church of Christ upon earth. At once such maxims as those of Cyprian were endued with an authority far greater than any which he had anticipated for them. At once was realised in its completeness the idea of that society, within whose limits salvation was guaranteed to men, and on obedience to whose constitution depended the participation in its benefits. Here then, that system, which, so far as it treated of Divine Grace was pre-eminently individual and immediate, subjected itself to the strictest hierarchical law. The same position which limited salvation to those who are within the pale of the Church, limited it also to those who partake of the Sacraments of the Church. The path was clearly defined: and that vast mass of mankind to

whom an infallible guidance is everything found an indescribable repose under the shadow of that priesthood, which was to them the sole steward, the only dispenser of all Divine blessings. But this system did not leave the members of that priesthood to bear a lighter burden than that of the multitudes to whom they conveyed spiritual life and food. They must exhibit the highest standard of the character required from all who would escape the defilements of the material world. Celibacy—or, as they delighted to term it, holy virginity—must become the condition of the clergy; not for the reasons of expediency given by St. Paul (for these and all such were indignantly disclaimed), but because thus only might the hierarchy discharge their sacred offices without defilement and contamination.

Energy of western monachism.

The same standard of perfection was proposed as the great object to be aimed at by all who would desire to be conformed to the Divine will. Thus was built up the fabric of western monachism; and only by analysing the principles of its growth can we account for the fact, that western monasticism was producing men like Gregory the Great, while that of the East was producing Simeon Stylites; that the latter absorbed every faculty in a dull routine of useless ecstasy, or sent men into the world with every brute passion let loose in exaggerated ferocity,

while the former subdued men in the cloister to send them forth to subdue mankind by their practical wisdom and energy. In no other way can we account for the combination, in the West, of so much that is lofty with so much that is degrading, of so much heroism with so much coarseness, of so great self-abnegation with so complete a want of real charity. Above all, in no other way can we account for the individual character of the whole of mediæval Christianity, —for that intense concentration on self, for that absorbing pursuit of those qualities which involve no reference to any but those in whom they are nurtured, for that religion which is enshrined in the celebrated manual of mediæval piety, the 'Imitatio Christi.' The subject is one which, melancholy though it may be, brings with it no little instruction, and, it may be hoped, no little encouragement. We may watch with sadness the extreme conclusions into which exaggerated positions must mislead men; the degree to which moral perception may be perverted, and the dictates of our common humanity set at nought. The conviction of Jerome that all the horrors of a plundered city, all the enormities of Alaric's soldiery, were more than mitigated, were compensated, by the resolution with which Demetrias preserved her virginity; the indignation of Gregory I., which pursued, even after death, the

body of a brother who confessed to possessing three pieces of money; the calm (could it be remorseless?) inroad made by St. Bernard on the cheerful and blameless happiness of his domestic hearth; the moral blindness which consecrated filial disobedience when displayed in the cause of monastic purity; the tradition which smote with sudden death the child whose thoughts reverted to his parents with more than legitimate tenderness; the wild enthusiasm of Benedict, the dark and repulsive coarseness of Peter Damiani, the stern practical vigour of Dominic, the more graceful austerities of Francis,—all reveal the intensity of influences which, perhaps with the utmost effort, we can scarcely realise. But the picture is presented in scarcely more than faint outline, until we look upon their early devotion, their later luxury; their voluntary ignorance, and their profound learning; their rapid degeneracy, their constant reforms; till we see Latin monachism reclaiming deserts, civilising wild tracts, winning heathen nations to Christianity, while that of the East seems dead to everything but its placid self-contemplation; till we see it rousing, strengthening, directing the mighty impetus of the Crusades, marshalling armies against infidels in Palestine and heretics in Provence; till we discern its indomitable perseverance in adding to the sum of human learning, its equal resolution

in extinguishing the free exercise of human thought; the marvellous tones of its science, the majestic and awe-inspiring achievements of its art; its purifying influences, its debasing superstition; the dusky chapel with its dismal array of relics and relic-worshippers, the glorious choir raising the very heart to heaven; the smoke-dimmed picture that works its miracles and prodigies for the awe-struck herd, the ineffable purity and peace that breathe in the beatified countenence when limned by the hand of Fra-Angelico.

Eastern Christianity not monarchical.

While then the idea of Eastern Christianity was not less sacerdotal or less Manichean than that of the West, it did not fasten itself with the same tenacity on the notion of government. And as it was not built upon any monarchical idea, so it was freed from the necessity of enforcing any monarchical organisation; and thus, while in its monastic system the doctrine of the corruption of matter and the principle of self-torture, almost of self-annihilation, was asserted with a determination certainly not surpassed elsewhere, it exhibited to the world the apparently inconsistent spectacle of a clergy, not only not bound by the law of celibacy, but even debarred from receiving holy orders without the violation of it. According to its idea, Christian perfection was attainable, not by living as

celibates in the world, but by withdrawing wholly from its business and its attractions. The way to it, therefore, lay not in undertaking the sacerdotal office, but in putting on the dark robe of the monk.

By a like process in the West, there was a constant temptation to substitute grounds of policy in place of religious considerations, for enforcing the celibacy of the clergy. If its origin is traceable to the common idea of Manicheeism, animating the writings alike of Jerome and Augustine, the farseeing wisdom of the popes was not long in discerning its marvellous congruity with their visions of world-wide supremacy. So was it in that terrible conflict which, partly under the pontificate of Hildebrand, convulsed the city of Milan. No vehemence could be greater than that by which Herlembald and Ariald sought to abolish the marriage of the clergy; no Manicheeism could be more coarse, more inhuman, than that on which Peter Damiani relied for the achievement of his victory. No scheme of pontifical ambition, no image of emperors prostrate before St. Peter's throne, steeled his heart against the agonies of insulted human nature, against the appeal of the strongest and the most sacred of human affections. Damiani would have turned the whole world into a cloister, while Hildebrand sought only to array an irre-

Clerical celibacy.

A.D. 1073–1085.

sistible army for his grand scheme of sacerdotal conquest.

But, since the time when in Gregory I. a monk was seated in St. Peter's chair, the condition and the prospects of the Papacy had greatly changed. It had secured great pre-eminence, it had suffered great degradation; it had received the gifts of powerful friends, it had been sometimes humbled by powerful foes. Mahometanism, by its irresistible aggressions, had weakened its Eastern rival; theological feuds had continued to weaken it not less. The kingdom of the Lombards had risen to its height, had flourished and had fallen. On the banks of the Loire, Charles Martel had averted from Europe a danger from the Saracen, scarcely less imminent than that which Leo the Isaurian had beaten back from the walls of Constantinople. The miserable fiction of Merovingian monarchy had been swept away by the son of the victor of Tours. Hard pressed by the Lombard, Pope Stephen II. had besought the aid of Pepin, whom his predecessor Zacharias had, by the hands of the Apostle of Germany, consecrated as the first Carlovingian king. The papal unction had hallowed his title in the eyes of a proud and turbulent nobility; the royal gratitude had bestowed upon the Pope the more substantial gift of the exarchate of Ravenna. Charles the Great had

Position and prospects of the Papacy.

A.D. 729.

A.D. 752.

wrested the iron crown of Lombardy from the
A.D. 800. head of Desiderius, and had been crowned by Leo III. as Cæsar and Emperor of the West. His great but ill-cemented empire had rapidly followed the degenerate course of the Merovingian. His legislation, which made the ecclesiastical subordinate to the civil power, had become obsolete in the superstitious reverence of Louis the Pious. The autocratic dictation of Justinian and Charles the Great had given place to the real sway of priestly domination. The long rivalry of Ravenna and Rome had ceased by the submis-
A.D. 861. sion of John, its archbishop, to Nicolas I. the Great. Dark and disgraceful times had fol-
A.D. 914 -963. lowed, wherein the Papacy had become utterly despicable abroad, and altogether powerless except for evil at home. Its annals had been filled with monstrous recitals of falsehood, adultery, and murder, with the license of Theodora, the corruption of Marozia, the iniquity of her son John XI., and of the puppets of his brother Alberic, the pope-maker. From this horrifying degradation it had been rescued only by the infusion of German sincerity and energy; and the enormities of Octavian, who at the age of
A.D. 996. nineteen years ascended the papal throne, were in some measure atoned by the ability and virtue of Gregory V. and Leo IX., if not by the wisdom of Gerbert, Archbishop of Ravenna, the

well-known Sylvester II. There had followed the strange sight, of a pope selling his throne and withdrawing from his bargain,—of three popes simultaneously warring with each other,—of Hildebrand himself going into banishment with the Didius Julianus of the Papacy.

But before Hildebrand there had risen up an image more colossal, more earthly than that which had animated the efforts of Gregory the Great. Gregory was a monk, therefore also a Manichean: but this principle, if it possessed any congeniality with the mind of Hildebrand, was wholly subordinate to, if not altogether swallowed up by, the one absorbing passion of ecclesiastical dominion. His aim was to subdue the world by a spiritual army: but the issue of his conquest was not to be confined to spiritual influence. It was to give him power over kingdoms, dictation over princes, the command of their weapons and their wealth. It was to humble civil polity under priestly autocracy: it was to prove (what Hildebrand scrupled not to assert), that the civil rule was in itself the mere development and working of the evil principle. But this conquest could only be achieved by a caste,[1] not by an order. In the world of ordinary men there must

Gregory the Seventh, A.D. 1073–1085.

[1] The use of the word may be allowed for want of a better, if it be objected that hereditary succession is involved in the idea of caste.

be another world—of men removed from all worldly affections, embarrassed by no worldly ties, with no ambition to found a family or prolong a line; and because the marriage of the clergy was a fatal obstacle in this path, therefore, with a resolution immovably calm and stedfast, he determined to remove it. To the evils which must follow, such a man as Hildebrand could not possibly be blind. He had probably looked them all steadily in the face; had well weighed the impossibility of extinguishing, the certainty of perverting, human passions; the frightful misery which must be caused by the rude disseverment of existing ties, the demoralisation which must ensue on the prohibition of legitimate affection. It mattered not. The springs of human sympathy had long been dried up in Hildebrand. His conscience was vexed by no doubts of the identity of the kingdom which he sought to establish with the kingdom of that Saviour whose Gospel he professed to preach. The priesthood must trample on the lion and the adder, must rule over the bodies and the souls of men. In the world, they yet must not belong to it. Uncontaminated by worldly lucre, undefiled by human passion, their whole being must be absorbed in that of the great sacerdotal army which enrolled its soldiers from every rank and class of men. Such an army must indeed win great victories. Though as yet

but imperfectly organised, it had won many such already. It had laid strongly the foundations of spiritual supremacy, it had won broad lands, it had raised mighty edifices. Wealth, honour, power, the sure portion of a dominant hierarchy, had descended upon them. The devotion, the superstition, or the remorse of kings and statesmen had endowed them with vast territories, had secured to them wide privileges. The first fervour of the disciples of Benedict of Nursia, of St. Columban, and St. Gall, had been succeeded by the luxury and grandeur of the monastic orders. The wealth which their early vows repudiated and abhorred, had flown in upon them, partly from their own industry, in part from the munificence of others. Stern and naked simplicity had given place to elegance, which, in its turn, developed into magnificence and grandeur. The path to greatness and distinction was laid open to men of the noblest lineage or the meanest descent. Spiritual power, with all its temporal consequences, might be grasped by those whom the temper of society and the spirit of feudal legislation shut out from all hope of political greatness and celebrity. But this very power and opulence involved its own dangers, and presented its peculiar temptations. The serf or the slave was not precluded from attaining to it: could he avoid aiming at it from sordid motives, from the desire

of money, the lust of temporal dominion? The possession of this power would enable him to practise on the terrors of mankind, whether to confirm his priestly authority, or to increase his earthly substance. Was it marvellous that the covetous or the baseborn chose the latter? Yet more, the tendency of feudalism was to make all offices and honours hereditary; but, in Dean Milman's words, 'hereditary succession once introduced into the Church, the degeneracy of the order was inevitable; the title to its high places at least would have become more and more exclusive; her great men would cease to rise from all ranks and all quarters,' the necessary result of the degeneracy of 'an open unexclusive caste to a close and hereditary one.'[1] Hence the war which Hildebrand waged against clerical marriage was only another phase of that which he waged against simony.[2]

[1] *Latin Christianity*, book VII. ch. i.

[2] The condition of monachism in this country from the days of Augustine to those of Dunstan and Æthelwolf is one of the most momentous questions in all English history before the Conquest. It is by no means one of the easiest; and the very anxiety to do full justice to men so differing from each other as Swithun, Dunstan, Eadward the Confessor, and Harold, seems likely to involve the subject in some confusion. The warfare between the secular and regular clergy was carried on in England not less fiercely than in Milan or at Rome. But was it a battle between the soldiers of a sacerdotal army, who (whether consciously or unconsciously) were establishing the great papal

Seeking therefore, by fair means or by foul, to promote sacerdotal aggrandisement, he was vainly striving to crush its genuine and inevitable offspring,—vainly endeavouring to maintain the integrity of his priestly army, while he desired to free them from all subjection

The question of investiture.

empire, and the weaker upholders of a Christian liberty which seemed to their adversaries more favourable to the growth of national churches than of their vast spiritual monarchy? Or was it simply the struggle of men who, seeking to do all things decently and in order, employed that organisation, which in a barbarous age was indispensable, against others who desired only to secure a life of worthless and disorderly self-indulgence? If monachism soon produced or exhibited evils, it has wrought its own incalculable good; and that good wears at the least a two-fold aspect. The hermit, who in the wilderness cultivated his little plot of ground for his daily sustenance, was the vanguard of an army which was to assault and pull down the strongholds of heathenism. The regulated societies of monks, in the first burst of self-sacrificing zeal, were the barriers for arresting the inroads of merciless savages, and the organised means for turning their energy into another and better channel. These were the benefits which monks conferred during the dissolution of the old society and the development of the new. Their intellectual and moral services, whether in the schools or cloisters of a later age, are not less pre-eminent and honourable; but it may be doubted whether the idea even of monastic life in England was in harmony with either the earlier or the later phases of monasticism elsewhere. In other countries the advocates of celibacy found their opponents in the ranks of the secular clergy; in England they seem to have encountered them as frequently in the monks. Did the opposition come altogether from men who would be worthless in any profession, or from those who might deserve the sympathy of St. Paul not less than that of our own age?

The abuses which existed in the English monasticism of the eighth century, Mr. Earle (*Gloucester Fragments*) attributes 'not

to the civil power,—vainly shutting his eyes to the fact, that the success of his war against in-

to the degeneracy of the order, but to the intrusion among them of unmonastic persons.' The exemption from all secular burdens, except those of the most necessary kind (and possibly even from these), was too strong a bait for the greedy and dishonest. It needed only to make a formal profession, and they might in their own persons enjoy their property free of public obligations, or they might receive it by lease from the religious body on which they had pretended to bestow it. Such persons might well be considered worse than the men of the world, and justify the indignation with which Bede complained of monastic houses which exhibited nothing of the monastic character. But Mr. Earle suddenly changes his ground when he turns from these wearers of a monastic mask to the burdens imposed on monasteries, and speaks of the state of things as one 'highly injurious temporally as well as spiritually.' The liberty claimed at the Synods of Clovesho and Cealchythe appears a strange remedy for abuses which had arisen from immunities already too great; and the donation of Æthelwolf, according to Hallam's interpretation, would only tend to keep up the state of things which the advocates of a more stringent asceticism deplored. But Mr. Earle, while he dwells strongly on the reformation of ecclesiastical discipline accomplished, to whatever extent, by Chrodegang, Archbishop of Metz, yet hesitates to assert how far his system (of a secular clergy living in groups subject to common regulations 'as to hours, diet, clothing, habits and pursuits') was carried out in England. The crusade of Dunstan seems to imply that it had achieved no great and substantial success. Yet in the destruction of monasteries and the diminution of monks during the inroads of the Northmen, Mr. Earle sees the evidence that in his time the monks were outnumbered not by a mere secular clergy, living without rule, but by organised canonical chapters. 'The bishop,' he urges, 'never dies, and this perpetuity his canons share.' During the ninth century monks decreased and canons increased. Some monasteries, finding it impracticable to maintain their numbers, had recourse to the

vestitures must finally be the deathblow to his scheme of unbounded spiritual empire. The

expedient of inviting canons to join their fraternity, and keep up the service and ceremonial of their house. The companionship of canons proved contagious to monks, who were disposed to prefer the rule canonical as less rigid than the monastic. In the tenth century the monasteries were hardly distinguishable from canonical chapters, except in perhaps a 'single one, in which monastic discipline had been maintained, namely, the monastery of Glastonbury' (p. 37). From this abbey Dunstan had now determined to extend throughout the country the rigid Benedictine rule in place of the 'comfortable anarchy of the canonical cloister.'

Yet such a description seems not altogether deserved, if, 'as the abbot was chief over the monastery, supported by his second in command, the prior, so in the canonical body the bishop presided and acted through the archdeacon or dean as his vicegerent' (p. 35). If with this constitution they imposed (as Mr. Earle throughout implies, and as the Canon of Chrodegang expressly imposed,) the state of celibacy with a rule extending to minute details of ordinary life, the terrible energy with which Dunstan assailed a system not very unlike his own, is not easily explained. If the condition of the clergy was such as Mr. Earle believes it to have been, why was the 'spirit of revival' so greatly needed from Glastonbury? There is, in truth, no evidence of an extensive canonical system at that time; there is evidence that the controversy between Dunstan and the clergy turned on the question of marriage. Even if it be asserted that the married monks, of whom Dean Milman (*History of Latin Christianity*, book VII. ch. i.) speaks as attached to most cathedrals under a kind of canonical rule, were chapters of secular clergy, their exercise of the right of marriage remains none the less a fact. This fact explains the vehemence of Dunstan; it almost justifies Dr. Lappenberg in regarding him as an ultramontane Roman Catholic. The pointed selection of secular canons by Harold for his minster at Waltham cannot well be taken to prove less than that, in his mind at least, the system

history of that struggle is at once magnificent and humiliating. Like Leo IX., like Innocent IV., and Boniface VIII., Hildebrand wins his victory over men of other lands only to fall by those of his own. The Emperor of the West had prostrated himself in abject supplication before the haughty pontiff at Canosa: the inexorable pope dies in exile, almost in captivity, at Salerno, with shaken faith in his own schemes, and a depression of spirit which called for the reproving consolation, 'In exile thou canst not die: Vicar of Christ, thou hast received the nations for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.'

Corruption of the clergy.

Hildebrand was dead; and the great army which he had organised went on in its career of conquest and degeneracy, holding continually a haughtier language and

which Dunstan strove to uphold and extend was directly connected with the spiritual ascendency of the Roman See. Mr. Earle urges the impotence of Rome during the tenth century as overthrowing the charge. But the idea of a sacerdotal empire had dawned on the minds of saints and theologians long before the development of the Papacy exhibited it to the world. Mr. Earle himself bids us remember that 'Rome was the mother of the Saxon Church, her capital city, to which she looked for instruction in much that pertains to this life, and still more in what belongs to the powers of the world to come' (p. 28). Nothing more was needed to make Dunstan a devoted soldier in the sacerdotal army, which was afterwards led on to conquest by Hildebrand and Damiani.

avowing more arrogant pretensions, while it sunk deeper and deeper in intrigue and luxury, in avarice and sensuality. The spectacle of its greatness overawed many; that of its corruption repelled and disgusted some. There may be in man little positive love of good, but there is a great actual dislike of hypocrisy and pretence. They who knew little, perhaps nothing, of the Gospel, could yet contrast the inconsistency of their spiritual claims with the tenor of their lives: others, who had some acquaintance with it, could not but see that the kingdom of the popes was in name, and in name only, the kingdom of Christ and of God. The contradiction gave birth to a zealous and orthodox desire of reformation in some, to an utter and contemptuous unbelief in others. Against both the Papacy declared an indiscriminate and internecine war. If the fears and the resentment of the popes were roused by the scholastic subtleties or the incomprehensible philosophy of Berengar and Abelard, they were driven to an ecstasy of terror by the more orthodox protests of Arnold of Brescia. Berengar might succeed in procuring exculpation from Hildebrand; Abelard might find a friend in the venerable Abbot of Clugny; but the Brescian could hope for neither sympathy nor mercy from Hadrian IV., the poor English scholar, or Frederick Barbarossa, the Cæsar of the line of Hohenstaufen. A.D. 1155.

The civil and temporal powers met on this point in something like unison and harmony. With all their suspicion and animosity, the greatest sovereigns of Europe could not but feel that the foundations of their power were inextricably involved with the Papacy. It was the papal sanction which had aided to depose the degenerate Merovingian, the papal chrism which had anointed the first Carlovingian king. It was the diadem of the ancient Cæsars, bestowed by the hand of Leo III., which rested on the head of Charlemagne. It was Hildebrand himself, who, by the hands of his instrument Alexander III., had transferred the crown of England from the son of Godwine to William the Bastard. Unity of interest overbore for the time all private grudge. The powers of the keys and of the sword, which would not meet to advance the happiness of mankind, met eagerly to persecute and slay. The emergency was indeed not slight. The gross repugnancy of sacerdotal practice with sacerdotal pretensions had roused into activity in some places the hearts, in others the intellects, of men. The impassioned harangues of Arnold of Brescia were sowing the seeds of future revolt on the shores of Zurich; the premature harvest of intellectual liberty was almost ripe in the fields of Provence and Languedoc. Strange indeed, and bewildering almost from their very number, are

Alliance of the popes and the emperors.

the conflicting phases of human life which pass before us in this period of wild commotion. With the strong sacerdotalism of the Middle Ages, side by side, with the empire of the Papacy, among the movements of its spiritual armies, are seen mingling alien developments of civil liberty, ill-starred aspirations after intellectual freedom entertained many centuries too soon. The persecutors and victims alike are gone; but the sympathies of the English reader cannot be wholly withheld from the brilliant, if not faultless and unexceptionable, ideal of polity, and that union of arts and sciences, which is exhibited by the Sicilian court of Frederic II., and in the beautiful kingdom of Raymond of Toulouse. And if he laments, as he cannot but lament, the indifference to religious restraints, the unthinking joyousness, the splendid voluptuousness, which seemed striving to make life one long holiday and festival, he cannot but feel regret for so much promise so harshly checked, for intellectual activity so mercilessly crushed, for art and science, and social feeling and the recognition of human instincts so cruelly nipped in the bud. Strange inconsistencies, also, there are in some among the actors in this sad drama; but these he will not so much wonder at as pity. That such men as Bernard and Innocent III. should consider every means lawful, every weapon hallowed, against the wretched enemies of

Christ and of his Church—that such horrible miscreants as Fulke of Marseilles and Arnold of Amaury should, without a pang of remorse, involve in one common slaughter the aged and the young, the mother and her infant—that Simon of Montfort, cased in the triple armour of a heart harder than the nether millstone, should exult with savage joy over the massacres of his sword and the torments of the Inquisition—in all this there is little ground for perplexity and astonishment. But the weakness of human nature is painfully exhibited, when men like Raymond and Frederic II. themselves turn, or are compelled to turn, persecutors; when the former, secretly sympathising with his gay and happy people, is brought to aid in their extirpation; when the latter, with his protest against sacerdotal polity and religion embodied in his magnificent Sicilian paradise, can enforce its system, or at least its theology, on all his subjects, with an implacable severity worthy of Gregory IX. himself. Near in its ideal, and similar in some points of its development, as was the careless society of the troubadour with his own luxurious civilisation, yet not a sign is there to betray that he regarded with the least emotion its rapid and terrible catastrophe. His appreciation of their *gai science*, of their art and their luxury, was chilled and quenched by the vile crowd of Petrobussians, Paulicians, and

Waldensians, by whom these careless voluptuaries were surrounded. Well may Dean Milman say of this murderous crusade against the anti-sacerdotalists, 'Never, in the history of man, were the great principles of justice, the faith of treaties, common humanity, so trampled under foot as in the Albigensian war. Never was war waged in which ambition, the consciousness of strength, rapacity, implacable hatred and pitiless cruelty, played a greater part. And throughout the war, it cannot be disguised that it was not merely the army of the Church, but the Church itself in arms. Papal legates and the greatest prelates headed the host, and mingled in all the horrors of the battle and the siege. In no instance did they interfere to arrest the massacre; in some instances they urged it on. "Slay all, God will know his own!" was the boasted saying of the Abbot Arnold, Legate of the Pope, before Beziers. . . . We have the melancholy advantage of hearing the actual voice of one of the churchmen who joined the army at an early period, and whose language may be taken as an expression of the concentred hatred and bigotry which was the soul of the enterprise — the historian Peter, monk of Vaux Cernay. He is the boastful witness to all its unexampled cruelties. Monkish fanaticism could not speak more naturally, more forcibly. With him all wickedness is centred in heresy. The

heretic is a beast of prey, to be slain wherever he may be found.'[1]

Still more promising than the premature civilisation in Provence, was that of Frederic's Sicilian kingdom. Fame spoke of his large political views; of solid benefits conferred on his people; of bridges and roads which he had built and made; of cities which he had adorned; of his great universities in which the whole circle of human knowledge was cultivated; of their studies in science, in moral philosophy, in natural history; of their familiarity with Greek language and literature, with Hebrew and Arabic; of more elegant accomplishments in poetry, in sculpture, and in painting. But here, as in Provence, the Churchmen took alarm at the first sign which portended the possible rejection of ecclesiastical authority, and the setting up of a society whose foundations would not be those of Augustine's City of God; and thus the child, of whom popes had been the guardians, whose dominions had been sheltered under the wing of papal protection, found himself in mature manhood locked in a deadly struggle with Gregory IX., the stern old man whom age could neither subdue nor tame. The affection of popes had been alienated for ever, so soon as the imperial crown rested on his brow. He had headed a crusade; but so

Sicilian kingdom of Frederic the Second.

A.D. 1227–1241.

[1] Book IX. ch. viii. (vol. iv. p. 123).

far from being suffered to atone for his transgression, it became itself one of his greatest sins. The fervour of crusading enthusiasm against infidels had passed away. The fiery zeal of Peter the Hermit, of Bernard, of Fulk of Neuilly, no longer drove millions to assume the cross. Frederic had made treaties where they had slaughtered, had won by diplomacy what they had failed to obtain by the sword. His wisdom, his policy, his moderation, were all in vain. A dark strife preceded and followed the death of Frederic, till Manfred was slain in battle, and the head of the last of the Hohenstaufens fell upon the scaffold. A.D. 1268.

But the growth of enemies without, and of corruption within the Church, had roused opposition of another kind; and it was the wisdom and good fortune of the Roman pontiffs neither to repress nor repudiate it. They found in the ranks of the new reformers a fresh, almost an infinite, accession of power. The Papacy, the Church of Rome, Christianity itself, seemed but too likely to lose its hold upon mankind, to be overwhelmed by a not undeserved contempt. Popes had filled the chair of St. Peter, in whom not a vestige appeared of the moral strength and greatness of men like Gregory I., or Leo the Great, or Hildebrand. All ranks and orders of clergy were seen hastening like birds of prey to seize on rich temporalities, utterly

General dissatisfaction with the state of the Church.

contemning their spiritual duties, and wholly wrapt up in all-absorbing avarice and ambition. Profligacy and vice lifted up their unblushing fronts without rebuke and without hindrance. There was impunity for gross immorality, a heavy reckoning for fictitious or technical offences. Men preached without sincerity, and heard without conviction. They bowed before the despotism of Catholic orthodoxy, but not without some suspicions that fire and sword were not the most Christian arguments to be employed against those who fell away from it. The doctrine of persecution was too sacred to be assailed openly. Probably none were conscious of the real source of their discontent; but there was felt no slight indignation that such monstrous excesses as those of Simon of Montfort should either be necessary or be permitted. The conviction was slumbering in many that the victory of the Church must be won by other forces and other weapons; and this conviction was kindled into active zeal by the preaching and example of Dominic and Francis. These men indulged in no deep ulterior schemes; but with the most complete singleness and sincerity of purpose declared their own mission, and enthralled the sympathies of thousands by the magic spell of their eloquence and their austerity. To manifest evil they applied a plain and direct remedy. Magnificence was to be displaced by a

stern nakedness, luxury by ceaseless mortification, pride by humility, viciousness of life by sanctity which should be beyond question, earthly policy by spiritual simplicity, above all, simony with its frightful progeny by utter absolute poverty. All ranks and classes were infected by the contagion. The whole population of towns and villages rushed to take the vows and bind round them the cord of Dominic and Francis. There was a hot, a maddening impulse to join the army of mendicants, as there had been to swell the armies of the Crusades. They raised no protest against persecutions; but their arms were not those of persecution, and it is possible that St. Francis, who would gladly have been burnt to save a heretic, might have refused to burn the heretic, if he had been put to the test.

In the midst of the Albigensian war, these merciful men first interposed their benignant influence to extinguish its horrors or mitigate its sufferings. And all their power, the magic of their name, every faculty of their being was placed as a tribute of absolute submission at the feet of the Roman pontiff. Henceforth there was no country in which the Pope had not an organised force owning no other obedience, but yielding infinite obedience to him, not one which he could not inundate with these determined votaries

Rise of the mendicant orders.

of the Papacy; not one in which he could not fix these legions in permanent garrisons, or employ them in roving warfare against all enemies, ecclesiastical or civil. If his own life exhibited no influence higher than that of mere policy, or even showed the working of darker passions and vices, he might rely on these holy champions to make up for his deficiency, to distract attention from papal iniquities by the splendour of Dominican or Franciscan sanctity. The issue did not belie the promise. They became mighty props of the great edifice of papal empire; but they also opened new sources of weakness. The jealousy of faction took the place of that unity which had so pre-eminently distinguished the Roman hierarchy. The very institution of these mendicant friars was a tacit satire against the secular clergy, almost against the great monastic bodies. The special protection accorded by popes to these creatures of their will, was a sign to the rest that they no longer enjoyed the first place in their affections, could no longer reckon on their highest favours. The celibate clergy, the great army of Hildebrand, found their loyalty cooling down, as they were confronted by these professors of a more austere and less worldly system. Yet more than this, the principle of monasticism, so wonderfully renovated by this novel application, followed rapidly in them the course of the old monastic orders. The acqui-

sition of wealth gave the lie to their profession of mendicancy. Ample and spacious buildings sheltered men who had sworn to be without house or home. They had forsworn power; they grasped it with greater tenacity than any who had preceded them. They were bound to meddle with no temporal concerns; their interference was more constant, more searching, more concentrated than that of any others. But even these were not the limits to their restless activity and ambition. They had abjured the magnificence of art, the pride of human learning; and from their ranks came forth men famed throughout the world for their skill in the former, and their attainments in the latter. The splendid Church of Assisi, rich with all the lustre of gold, and azure, and vermilion, rose above the naked edifice where Francis had worshipped, and where his bones reposed. Nations stood astonished at the profound science of Albert the Great and Thomas of Aquino. Men gazed with all the fervour of admiring devotion on the angelic countenances and placid forms which looked down with indescribable serenity from the walls and tablets of their choirs and shrines. No fascination was wanting to rivet the senses or the intellect. There was all the pomp of solemn ritual, all the gorgeousness of priestly decoration; there was the echo of music, unearthly in its touching sweetness or moving power, the

gleaming robes, the censers, and the golden candlesticks. The relics of their saintly founders and generals were inshrined in coffers of lavish cost and workmanship. The altar glistened with its sumptuous cross, its jewels, and its broidered hangings.

Meanwhile the stream of Latin Christianity was diverging further and further from that of the East. Their mutual relations had almost from the first been those of hostile rivalry or ill-concealed schism. The Roman pontiffs and the Byzantine patriarchs had more than once lain, each under the other's ban, each under that excommunication which, in its literal force, consigned the offender to eternal irrevocable perdition. The days of Photius and Nicolas I. had been followed by periods of increased estrangement and jealousy; and the prospect of reconciliation became the more hopeless as the controversy related to insignificant points of practice, or incomprehensible points of theology. Nor had there been wanting more tangible grounds of alienation. The gigantic and disorderly armies which Western Christendom had set in motion for the rescue of the holy sepulchre and for the reunion of the divided churches tended directly to widen the breach, and to render the gulf of separation impassable.

Alienation of the East from the West.

A.D. 857-867.

The Crusaders had horrified the East with their violence and licentiousness; and the stoutest champions of the Cross in Palestine were abandoned by the popes when profit seemed more likely to be obtained by betraying than by protecting men who had been useful instruments in times past. They were not more disinterested in their dealings with another Order which on the whole was doing their work in north-eastern Europe while the Templars strove to hold their ground under the burning suns of Palestine. The same age which saw the destruction of the proudest Order of Christian chivalry, witnessed also an effort less effectual, but not less determined, for the overthrow of an Order destined to exercise a more permanent influence on the political condition of Europe. The history of the latter society is but little known, and in itself has no great interest; but if we compare it with that of the Templars, not many events in the history of Christianity are more instructive. The Teutonic Knights stand charged with a long catalogue of real crimes, many of which were fully brought home to them: the Templars sunk under a load of imaginary offences. The accusations against the one bring before us a series of great but practicable iniquities: the indictments against the Templars set forth an array of absurd impossibilities. For enormities existing only in the

The Templars and the Teutonic Knights.

brains of their enemies, the Templars, abandoned by the popes, were hunted to death: in spite of real guilt, the Teutonic Order, never wholly cut off from papal favour, laid the foundation of one of the mightiest of the kingdoms of modern Europe. And in this fact we have a sufficient reason for laying some stress on a narrative which might otherwise deserve less careful notice.

Five and twenty years had passed away since the last Grand Master of the Templars denounced at the stake the falsehoods of his accusers, when the papal legates at Warsaw sat in judgment on the claims of the kings of Poland against the Teutonic Knights of the Hospital of St. Mary, in Jerusalem. Thier sentence of restitution and compensation was contemptuously set at nought by the Brethren: and the Lithuanian Jagello, who by marriage had obtained the Polish throne, was compelled, nearly a century afterwards, to carry his quarrel from the battle-field to the council-chamber at Constance, and seek from the lips of Martin V. and Sigismund a decision more effectual than any which he had won by his counsels or his sword.

Charges against the Teutonic Knights.

A.D. 1338.

The Order could already boast of an existence of nearly 150 years. Their beginning had been humble, their object purely one of charity. In the disastrous siege of Acre, which so miserably distinguished the third crusade, a few German merchants, from the coasts

Rise of the Teutonic Order.

A.D. 1189-1191.

of the Baltic, sought to mitigate the sufferings of the besiegers by running up the sails of their ships into tents for the sick and dying. Their good offices attracted the attention of the Emperor and the Pope: and they continued to aid and shelter German pilgrims till the crusade of Frederic II. Then under their fourth Grand Master, Herman of Salza, the personal friend of the Emperor, the Order rose to distinction: and possibly at the suggestion, certainly with the sanction, of Frederic II. and Gregory IX., the more distant shores of the Baltic became the scene of the subsequent career of the Order. The circumstances of Conrad, regent of Poland for Boleslas V., concurred with the aims of the Knights. The neighbourhood of the savage Prutheni was a constant source of annoyance; and he hailed the arrival of the Knights, who had forsaken the chamber of the suffering for the battle-field, as a happy means for procuring their conversion or their extirpation. He assigned to them the territory of Culm, on the Vistula, for a term of twenty years, as a crusading ground against all enemies of the faith of Christ. This compact, of which the Knights denied all knowledge but which there seems little or no reason to call in question, was not fulfilled; but the kingdom of Poland was so weak, or the Teutonic Order so strong, that in 1307 Vladislas IV. was glad to intrust to their keeping, for a time, the fortress of Gdansk

A.D. 1228.

A.D. 1307.

against the attacks of the Marquis of Brandenburg. The service was performed, the compact again broken or forgotten: and for this want of memory or of honesty, they were condemned by the legates of John XXII. to restore the fortress, and make amends in money for its detention. To this sentence they gave no heed, and they had remained in consequence under the ban of the papal excommunication: but in the interval which passed between this event and his death Vladislas IV. was not idle. He had found the papal censures but a poor weapon against the avarice and treachery of the Knights; and in three expeditions he sought, with various success, to make them feel the force of purely secular chastisements. In the last of these he is said, in 1331, to have been victorious, in a battle in which 20,000 of the troops of the Order were slain. The whole expedition had indeed been characterised by every species of cruelty and excess. Neither age nor weakness arrested the sword of the conqueror: and Vladislas, having almost but not quite succeeded in his heart's desire, bequeathed their final annihilation, as the special work of his reign, to his son, Kasimir III.

Appeal to Benedict XII.

It was this old quarrel which the legates of Benedict XII. had to decide: but when they insisted on the fact of the previous sentence of John XXII., the Grand Master replied

by protest and appeal, which the legates rejected as vexatious and frivolous.[1] The protest of Theodoric had reference to the terrible cruelties of Vladislas: and the total silence of all the witnesses as to this frightful tragedy shows the danger of drawing negative conclusions from what may seem the most impartial and rigorous of judicial investigations. By all of them the campaign of 1331 is laid entirely to the charge of the Knights: the attack, the cruelties, the murders, are all begun and carried on by them: and the charge is pressed with a vehemence which never pauses to reflect that the better cause had been practically made the worse. The most important facts connected with this history are brought out in the examination of John Bishop of Posen, and of his nephew Presdrew, a canon of Posen, the brother and son of Bogussa, governor of Dantzig at the time of its occupation by the Knights. The account which both agree in giving of the transaction of this period, however much it may prove the avarice or the faithlessness of the Order, betrays the most lamentable weakness on the part of the Polish king. In the very country which was regarded as the most precious appendage of the Polish crown, and in its most important

[1] See the processes of the various appeals and trials in *Lites ac Res Gestæ inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum.* Posen: 1856.

fortress, the viceroy of Vladislas found himself unable to cope with the many enemies who, in the words of Presdrew, had risen up, owing to the utter weakness of the king. Against the most important of these, the Marquis of Brandenburg, Bogussa looked in vain to Vladislas for aid. To his application for assistance or removal from the government of Dantzig, Vladislas replied by confessing his inability to help, but recommending him to get what he might require by robbing and spoiling the territory. The more tender conscience of Bogussa recoiled from this expedient; and, as a more agreeable alternative, he offered to put the Teutonic Knights in possession of a part of the fortress until they received from the king full compensation for the labour and expenses which they might incur in helping him to guard the city. The Knights, having once gained admission, showed little sign of resting contented with a divided authority. A series of insults offered to Bogussa was followed up by his expulsion, with the promise, however, that the fort should be again made over to his keeping so soon as the Order should have received full satisfaction from Vladislas. Dantzig was thus in their hands. The treachery of one of the garrison soon opened to them the fortress of Sweckze, and the whole land of Pomerania, which its duke Mistiwog had in 1296 solemnly ceded to King Prezemislas, sub-

mitted to the sway of the Order; and, as Vladislas proved unable to produce the sum at which the Knights valued their services, their grasp was not relaxed.

Of the cruelties and excesses which attended these aggressions, the bishop and his nephew speak in the forcible language of men who have themselves been sufferers. The former had had his house burnt and his property plundered; but when asked if he knew the faces of the Grand Master or any of his Knights, he replied, not unnaturally, that he did not, and that he had no wish to know them, his object being to escape as quickly as he could from men, who, if they could have caught him, would certainly have killed him. But while his memory is clear as to the time of these calamities, he omits to state that the year of their occurrence (1331) was also the year of the terrible expedition of Vladislas, and that this may have had some share in causing the ravages of which he complains. In his own evidence he is also silent with regard to another fact, which, if true, might be pleaded in further extenuation of their offences. According to the testimony of Andrew, chancellor of the cathedral of Posen, the Teutonic Knights had suffered such grievous rebuffs at the hands of the Lithuanians and Prussians who had been committed to their pastoral care, that they brought

Cruelties of the Teutonic Knights.

to Vladislas the keys of the fortresses in the territory of Culm, saying that they were unable to hold them against the savages whom they had undertaken to convert. And his authority for this statement is John Bishop of Posen himself. It is singular, indeed, to find the witnesses frequently claiming numerous authorities for their assertions, and when asked to name some or any, urging their numbers or their death as a reason for forgetting all. It is strange again to find Albert, dean of Plocz,[1] avowing total ignorance of so notorious a fact as the condemnation of the Knights by the legates of John XXII., which the bishop of Posen (himself one of the commission for the citation of the Grand Master) relates with the most minute particulars. But it can be no matter for surprise, in a contest where both sides grasped at every possible proof that might further their cause, to find many links weak or worthless and much evidence inconclusive. Deeds of cession on the part of rulers, acts of consent on the part of the people, are urged by the King of Poland as the evidence for his right to certain provinces of his kingdom, together with the more curious reason that those provinces must be part of Poland because they pay Peter's pence, a tribute paid by Poland alone of all the countries of north-eastern Europe.

[1] *Litcs ac Res Gestæ*, i. 99.

There is a strange monotony in the history of the Teutonic Order. The suit, instituted by Kasimir the Great, ended, like the previous one, with a legatine sentence, which condemned the Knights to pay the sum of 194,500 marks, together with all costs on both sides. This sentence was as little heeded as the former one; and, four years later, Kasimir was constrained to accept the mediation of the Kings of Hungary and Bohemia, and to yield up to the Order the absolute possession of Cujavia, Culm, and Michalow. But the progress and tactics of the brethren continued unchanged, and Jagello found himself, as Vladislas V., much in the same relation to them as his more fiery namesake Vladislas IV. The chieftain of the savage Lithuanians had embraced Christianity, had aided in the conversion of his subjects, had made vigorous efforts against the restless and aggressive Order, and, like Vladislas IV., had defeated them in a tremendous battle which had almost destroyed their forces. But his victory produced no permanent result. Another compromise was followed, as before, by an appeal to the spiritual power, and the victor of Tannenberg was driven to plead the cause of his kingdom before the Council of Constance.

Appeal to the Council of Constance.

The pleadings of the Polish advocate before the Council may fairly excite a smile, as we read

his vehement appeals to abstract principles of ethics in matters wherein he must have felt that his own side was almost as much in the wrong as the other. There is an affectation of guileless simplicity in the ascription of the purest motives to the councillors of Constance; and the cogency of some part of the reasoning is ludicrously in contrast with the marvellous absurdity of the rest. His pages are garnished with abundant references to Aristotle and Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, and the four gospels. It is not easy to do justice to the wonderful chain of syllogisms, of which, however, a few may be translated, as serving to show the difference between the measure dealt out to the Teutonic Order and the portion of the far less guilty Templars. First: the Knights are proved to be no Knights,[1] for they were instituted as the brethren of St. Mary's Hospital at Acre, and by their removal from Palestine they have ceased to be such; and their hospital of St. Mary in Jerusalem never existed except in imagination. Again: they are not the same order, because things of the same species agree in substance, and those which so agree produce the same effect; whereas these are concerned with camps, not with hospitals. Nor are they a religious order, because a hospital was the final cause of

Charges urged against the Teutonic Order.

[1] *Lites, &c.* iii. 71.

their institution; and as the hospital is gone, so is also their religious profession. Again: by calling themselves hospitallers when they are not, their profession of religion is a falsehood, and such falsehood is hypocrisy: the Knights, therefore, are hypocrites.[1] Yet more: a state of religion is a certain school, wherein one is exercised to the perfection of charity: but the Knights are enrolled avowedly for purposes of robbery and murder; and as their life tends rather to perfection in cruelty than in charity (a state repugnant to the love of God and our neighbour, and to the evangelic verity), their state is plainly one not of religion, but of error; and as nothing is opposed to charity but mortal sin, therefore the Order itself consists fundamentally in mortal sin.[2] Logical sequence brings them to admit that Jews and Saracens are our neighbours, to be converted by all lawful means, but not to be plundered or deprived of their territories. Not only, however, are the Knights liars and hypocrites, they are also heretics; because heresy is by Thomas Aquinas defined to be division from the common faith, which is identified with charity: and as the objects of the Order involve violence, rapine, sedition, and homicide, (which are opposed to charity,) therefore the Order is a heresy. Nay, they are worse than

[1] *Lites, &c.* iii. 77. [2] *Lites, &c.* iii. 84.

Jews and Turks, because all heretics professedly Christians, are worse than the Turks, who have never received the Gospel, and even than the Jews, who have received only a figure of it in the Old Testament. They are even worse than all other heretics,—worse, if possible, than the Donatists, because if the Donatist heresy had spread, according to Gratian, over all Africa, and done grievous damage to the Church, the Teutonic heresy has done more, and poisoned for a longer time the faith of Christendom. It has lured its mercenaries to the destruction of their souls from Italy and France, from England and all Germany. It is worse than other heresies, because it rebels not only against the law of God, but also against that of nature. It is worse, because they annually carry fire and sword among the heathen on the two great feasts of the blessed Virgin in her especial honour, and because they sin against the canons of the Council of Toledo, which say that no man is to be saved against his will. It is therefore obstinacy, presumption, and madness to profess openly, as they do, that their Order was instituted for the extermination of the heathen, who are their neighbours, and for the plundering of their goods and lands.

This reasoning has a certain cogency, and the arguments are not altogether weak in their appeal to ethical and Christian laws. But the pleader

had not, probably, altogether forgotten that the hands of his own countrymen were not wholly pure from all this heinous iniquity, that their dukes and kings had assigned to the Teutonic Knights many a province which was not theirs to give, and granted them free leave to rob and plunder tribes whom they found it convenient to brand with the name of heathens and savages. Probably he may have remembered also the more orthodox crusade in which Simon of Montfort spread desolation over the pleasant regions of Provence. Possibly he may have read (if he ever came across the exploits of Henry II. and the Normans in Ireland) that other popes besides Gregory IX. and Alexander IV. had given up a people, already Christians, as a prey to the sword of the invader. The pleader expresses a devout hope that the Order may be utterly extirpated, or else sent back to tend the sick in an hospital.[1] His prayer again brings up the contrast between this prosecution of the plunderers of Pomerania with that which had first extinguished the Order of the Temple in flames and blood. The motives of fear and hatred are the same: there are the same imputations of cruelty, falsehood, hypocrisy, and heresy, but not a trace of those foul and obscene slanders or of

Contrast between the fortunes of the Templars and the Teutonic Knights

[1] *Lites, &c.* iii. 80.

those supernatural and impossible crimes which render the processes against the Templars in France and England infamous and disgusting. Whether the comparative moderation of the Polish pleader might, under altered circumstances, have stooped to the same unworthy scandals, is a question which, for the sake of human nature, it may be as well not to answer. The condition of the two orders was different. The one was taken unawares, far from the scenes of its exploits and its greatness: the other stood on its own ground amidst its victorious legions. Boundless wealth was supposed to be attainable by the annihilation of the one; cold and forbidding regions were alone to be recovered by the suppression of the other. It is no wonder that the Knights of the Temple perished by an infamous combination, while the last Grand Master of the Teutonic Order became himself the first of a long line of powerful princes and kings.

In such ways as these the popes flung aside or temporised with men whom they were content to use as their instruments, so long as it seemed to be to their interest to do so. But it was not so easy to put an end to the alienation which was opening a wider gulf between Eastern and Latin Christianity. At length, after an interval of two centuries, a feeble and abortive effort was made for the reunion of the

Council of Florence, A.D. 1438.

two churches. The Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople were received by Pope Eugenius IV. at Ferrara, from Ferrara conveyed to Florence. Latin complaisance and adroitness achieved a deceptive and artificial reconciliation; but the whole history is rather a melancholy tragedy than the jubilant record of united Christendom. Not one of the actors in it but had lost something of his ancient power, and fallen from his ancient dignity. The feeble Palæologus was the representative of Constantine the Great, of Heraclius, of Leo the Isaurian;—a prelate yet more feeble was the successor of Basil, of the Gregories, and of Chrysostom. The Pope also had fallen, not indeed from the plenitude of his pretensions, but from the moral greatness, the temporal power of Leo and Gregory and Innocent III. In the persons of a few, the Papacy had preserved a questionable respectability; in such men as Boniface VIII. and John XXIII. it had become hateful and infamous. The Council of Ferrara and that of Florence were held in opposition to that of Basle, which Eugenius had himself recognised as œcumenic. That of Constance had asserted the supremacy of general councils over all papal authority whatsoever. The magnificent schemes of universal spiritual empire were well nigh exploded, or had been transformed into mere aspirations for wealth

A.D. 1431–7.

A.D. 1416.

or for the attainment of a place among the temporal sovereigns of Europe. The loftier views of Hildebrand and Innocent III. would have been absurdly misplaced in the miserable line of Avignonese pontiffs, in the baffled politician who betrayed the Templars to the avarice of Philip the Fair, in the luxurious if not sceptical Clement VI., the friend of Petrarch and Rienzi.

The issue of the Council of Florence harmonised well with the waning fortunes of the Papacy. John VI. Palæologus returned to his imperial city, not accompanied by the spiritual head of Eastern Christendom; and the visitor wonders to behold under the magnificent dome of Florence the tomb of Joseph Patriarch of Constantinople. If little powerful and little known in his life, he was happy in the time and the circumstances of his death. He might console himself with the thought of reunited Christianity, whatever might be the value of the treaty. He was spared the indignant contempt with which the Greeks repudiated the decision of the council; he was not to witness the great catastrophe, when fifteen years later the crescent of the Prophet glistened on the dome of St. Sophia.

Joseph Patriarch of Constantinople.

CHAPTER II.

MAHOMET.

It is unnecessary to connect with any comparatively recent condition of Christendom the fall of the last of the Eastern emperors by the sword of the victorious Ottoman. The great catastrophe which placed Mahomet II. on the seat of the Roman Cæsars was the result of an impulse given eight hundred years before; and if the arms of the Prophet's followers had achieved signal success, they had also suffered grievous disasters since the days when Abubekr led the Saracen hosts to Damascus and Amrou carried the standard of Islam through Egypt. If they now laid their hands on the inheritance of Constantine and Julian, they had lost their hold on the fair realm which Taric and Muza had wrested from the degenerate Goth on the plain of Xeres. The significance of Mahometan conquest lay, not in the fall of Constantinople, but in the marvellous conversions which had shown, in the days of Mahomet's immediate successors, the rottenness of Eastern Christianity. The apostasy of nations can be explained only by the weakness of the religious system to which

Influence of Mahometanism on Christianity.

they had been supposed to bear a willing allegiance; and the ease with which a large portion of the Eastern world bowed to the yoke of the caliphs had doubtless seriously weakened the Eastern Church, while it strengthened the supremacy of the popes over the Churches of the West. The withering influence of Mahometanism, although not directly exercised, was visible enough in the Council of Florence; nor is it impossible that greater unanimity between the East and West might have long delayed, and perhaps altogether averted, the fall of the Byzantine Cæsars.

Protests against traditional systems.

But the history of Mahometanism is instructive not merely as a comment on the long tale of wrong and injustice which has left in the hearts of Greek Christians a sense of indignation as lively now as it was four centuries ago,[1] but as showing the working of causes which have set Teutonic and Latin Christianity in permanent antagonism. The sword of the Prophet did no more than enforce the protests of Iconoclastic emperors, and the zeal which impelled Abubekr and Omar in their irresistible career was closely akin to the convictions which brought upon the less fortunate heretics of Provence and Languedoc the vengeance of merciless Inquisitors. The struggle of Mahomet against the dominant religion of Arabia closely

[1] Ffoulkes, *Divisions of Christendom*; and *The Church's Creed and the Crown's Creed.*

resembled the warfare in which Luther found himself engaged against the Latin Church; and although it would be absurd to speak of the one as leading to or being in any way a cause of the other, we are not justified in shutting our eyes to the working of principles which underlie the developements of Teutonic Christianity. Hence it becomes a matter of the first importance to form a definite and unprejudiced judgment on the life and work of the great founder of Islam.

Popular views of the life and work of Mahomet.

To superficial thinkers, the subject may present but little difficulty. If they are unbiassed in favour of particular theological systems, they may be satisfied with regarding Mahomet as a cold and scheming impostor, whom accident or the force of circumstances placed at the head of a great confederacy, and who raised the fabric of his power on the credulity and sensual passions of his followers. But if their convictions are deeper and their devotion to any special religious school stronger, the picture becomes invested with a more sombre and repulsive colouring. The characteristics of conscious imposture and wilful deception remain the same; but they are attributed to demoniacal influence and Satanic agency. The image of Antichrist rises up before them, and in the life and teaching of Mahomet are clearly seen its loathsome and horrible features. In his marvellous career and

its astonishing results they behold throughout the hand, not of God, but of his enemy; and the Apostle of Islam is thrust down to the lowest pit amongst the vilest of traitors and the most deadly of heretics. To scan his features and examine his acts would be to tamper with evil and expose themselves to its corrupting influences, and the words of Christ and his apostles, in which they read his express condemnation, dispense with a task at once arduous and irksome. The conclusions of so shallow and blind a bigotry have not unnaturally called into existence an admiration almost as partial and unmerited. The plea of sincerity has been urged as an extenuation for erroneous teaching, and the system of Mahomet has been painted as at once beneficent and humane. Of the large number of works which have treated, whether specially or incidentally, of the teaching of Mahomet, a large majority embody the conclusions of these three classes of thinkers; and the contemptuous indifference of the first is perhaps scarcely less to be deprecated than the vehement antagonism and the undue and false admiration of the others.

Political disunion and moral corruption had indeed well nigh dealt a fatal blow to all national greatness, when the founder (or restorer) of Arabian monotheism appeared among his countrymen. The vast peninsula which stretches from the mouth of the Nile to the

Condition of Arabia before the birth of Mahomet.

Sea of Oman, from the head of the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Babaal-Mandâb, had passed through a strange and chequered history, emerging sometimes from its obscurity and again falling back into all its mysterious monotony. Something, indeed, it had exhibited of greatness and magnificence. It had received the costly products of India, and transmitted them with the spices and fruits of her own happier regions to the vast world of Roman dominion. But with all its opulence and splendour, it had still remained isolated from the surrounding nations: it had exercised no influence on their fortunes and their power; it had been moulded but little by the forms of any foreign civilisation. The vast aggregate of tribes, which claimed the son of Abraham and Hagar as their progenitor, seemed indeed to be divided into two distinct classes,—the one clinging to the roving life and wild independence of their common ancestor, the other labouring contentedly in the busy marts of traffic and amassing wealth in splendid and populous cities. The merchants of Mecca, of Petra, and of Bostra may have rivalled the wealthiest citizens of Rome, and their towns may have presented the spectacle of luxury congenial to a sedentary and commercial people. But their traditional character had been rather modified than changed, rather diverted by circumstances into a new channel than weaned

from ancient habits and associations. The commerce which had been transported on the ships of the desert from the cities and gardens of Yemen to the rock-hewn cities of Idumæa was drawn off to the ports at the head of the Red Sea. The energy and perseverance of Roman enterprise forsook the rugged defiles of the mountains, so soon as it had opened out a speedier, if not safer, transit by water. The marts of the Nabathæans were deserted, the annual train of caravans interrupted, and the wealth and splendour of the Arabian traders destroyed. The palaces of Petra became silent and ruinous; and the wild rovers of the desert took the place of the merchant princes, with their hand against every man and every man's hand against them. Thenceforth the history of the several tribes had exhibited for the most part a fearful monotony of feuds and warfare, treachery and bloodshed. Strife became their normal condition, broken by short and fitful truces, grudgingly given and eagerly violated. What the tenth century was at Rome to the annals of the Papacy, that was the period following the suppression of Arabian commerce to the descendants of Ishmael and Yarab. If the reader turns away wearied and disgusted by the wild factions and headlong iniquities of John XIII. and Benedict VI., if he only with difficulty sees the slender thread which connects these scenes of anarchy

and violence with better times, he will feel yet more wearied and repelled by the narrative of hereditary feuds embittered in their descent from sire to son, by continual war between tribe and tribe which acknowledged no common centre and even threw aside all individual subordination. In the midst of this perpetual tumult, if not altogether in consequence of it, the religion of the peninsula had been corrupted as much as its civilisation had been repressed. Here and there were seen at work the conflicting influences of Judaism and Christianity; but the worship of the vast majority was a gross and degraded idolatry. The Sabaism of the Arabs had not indeed lost all trace of Abrahamic tradition. It had not altogether forgotten the sacred doctrine, to guard which had been the special work of the posterity of Jacob; but the Unity of the Godhead had been overlaid by a fetish worship which rendered it practically a nullity. A notion of mediation, whether originating amongst themselves or derived from others, had led to the personification of the heavenly bodies and to their establishment as intercessors with the unseen God, who was too highly exalted to take note of the wants or the sufferings of men. But the tribes who were thus torn asunder by feud and faction still retained in this their common idolatry a centre of religious attraction; and the Kaaba at Mecca with its

grim array of three hundred and sixty deities (like the three hundred and fifty cattle of Helios in the island of Thrinakia) was to the Arab what the temple on Mount Zion with its imageless shrine was to the Hebrew. The influence of Judaism was felt chiefly in the regions of Medina and Mecca, that of Christianity in the ancient Himyarite kingdom of Yemen; and the army of the Christian Abrahah, the powerful Abyssinian viceroy, perished in the same year which witnessed A.D. 570. the birth of Mahomet. But neither Judaism nor Christianity had appeared in Arabia in their fairest colours. The Jews were seemingly more versed in the wild legends and absurd traditions of the Talmud than in the writings of their prophets, the Christians more vehement in upholding orthodox or heretical dogmas than careful of the realities which those dogmas were supposed to represent. The Arabian peninsula had either received or given birth to a large number of heresies, and the conflicts of schismatical teachers furnished a strange comment on the religion which proclaimed peace on earth and goodwill among men. Thus while the great body of the nation, or rather of hostile tribes, was resigning itself more and more to a gross and debasing idolatry, with no political allegiance and no civil subordination, a few only here and there (such as they whom Arab tradition has marked by the name of

the Four Inquirers) were stirred up to something like thoughtful sorrow for the condition of their countrymen, and prayed for some remedy, of which yet, amidst the strife of weapons and tongues, they well nigh despaired.

It was at this crisis in their history that the child was born who was afterwards to unite this chaotic mass by the strongest ties of religious obedience and union, to put away the degrading rites of the old idolatry, and lead the believers in the Unity of God to convert the infidel on the battle-field. The tribe of Koreish was divided into the rival families of Haschem and Abd Shems; and Abd al Mutalib, the representative of the former, received from his mother the infant Mahomet, the only child of his son Abdallah, whose death he was still mourning. A few years later the fatherless child was deprived also of his mother, and was left altogether to the care and protection of his grandfather. Five and twenty years passed away with few incidents except the Sacrilegious War (one of those instances of the violation of Sacred Months, which the state of Arab society rendered a matter of little wonder) and the annually-recurring fair at Oeatz, where the child Mahomet witnessed the poetical contests of the tribe, and heard (what was to him of far higher moment) the preaching of the Christian bishop of Najran. Once he accom-

Early years of Mahomet.

panied the caravan to Syria, and there beheld the solemn ritual of the Christian Church and may have imbibed possibly some little of Christian teaching. But besides this no record remains of his early years except that which tells of the gentleness of his demeanour and the purity of his life. The shepherd boy who guarded the flocks of his uncle Abu Taleb (for his grandfather was long since dead) was known commonly by the name of Al Amîn, or the Faithful; and, on the recommendation of his uncle, the excellence of his character at once obtained for him the superintendence of a caravan from Khadijah, the daughter of the Koreishite Khuweilid. His carefulness and probity were rewarded with a more than usual profit on the sale of the merchandise; and when he was introduced on his return, his appearance and demeanour won the heart of Khadijah and led to his union with the wealthy widow. During fifteen years more, it is said, he lived happy in the privacy of his home and the affection of his wife and children. The rebuilding of the Kaaba gave him, at the age of five and thirty, the first opportunity of exercising his judgment and sagacity before his countrymen; but it was not till he approached the age of forty years (a suspicious date in Eastern story) that the signs of a deeper and more important change became apparent. Always thoughtful and re-

served, always refraining from intemperance and excess, he had won the respect, perhaps the love of his countrymen; but there was no reason to believe that under this quiet aspect his heart was constantly stirred by the yearning for a complete reform of their political and religious condition. If he had given utterance to any deeper conviction, had expressed his abhorrence for the gross and material idolatry which centred in the Kaaba, this was known only to the faithful partner of his life and cares.

But the symptoms were now evident of a graver change in his life and character. His habit of thoughtfulness was merged into fits of gloomy and silent abstraction. He withdrew even from the quiet of his home to the solitude of a cave, and remained for days in deep musing. Nor was it long before his thoughts and the yearnings of his heart found utterance in words. The language betrayed a high-wrought and fervid mind. In few but wild phrases, it expressed his desire for Divine aid and a conviction of the presence and the power of God. A resurrection from the grave, a future judgment for all the sons of men, a righteous retribution for every thought and act, the paramount need of justice, mercy, and faith, with declarations of the mercy and long-suffering of God, formed the substance of the earliest Suras or revelations which

The mission of Mahomet.

were afterwards expanded into the bulky volume of the Koran. Presently the thought of human recklessness and disobedience seemed to fill him with a more vivid apprehension of Divine wrath to be executed upon all sinners and unbelievers; and the fearful vision of the Pit and the Crushing Fire becomes more prominent in the hurried rhapsodies which summoned his countrymen to repentance and reformation. The brief sketches, given now and then, of the religious life are practically a setting forth of kindly offices. As with the Psalmist among the Hebrews, so with him the acceptable religion is to 'feed the captive and give food to the poor that lieth in the dust, and stir up one another to stedfastness and compassion.'[1] But the light so vouchsafed to him was not to be kept hidden in the recesses of his own heart. The fact of his having received it was itself a call for displaying it before others. His wife Khadijah, his freedman Zeid, with a few others, heard his words and accepted his teaching; but to all others they were idle tales, and himself one whose reason was perverted by his dreams. What then should repress their obstinacy and remove their unbelief but the mission of a prophet—of himself—to testify against their idolatrous worship and their debasing sensuality? And thus shortly he began to work as a public

[1] Sura xc.

preacher, and declared all his words to be the actual utterances of God. To him the spiritual world lay open, and the angel went and came to him from the throne of the Almighty. Like the Moabitish seer of old time, he saw the things of God, falling into a trance but having his eyes open. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit: he was but the mouthpiece of the Divine Being who spake by his lips. But the revelation of His Will in itself conferred on him the office and character of an apostle. He was sent to bear the tidings of repentance and acceptance with God to those who were sharing with the creature or with a phantom the honour of the Creator; and whether they heard or forbore, he was charged with the same message. Every word which fell from him at the times of inspiration was the absolute declaration of the Divine Will, to be treasured up by his followers as the guide of their lives and the consolation of their hearts. But a Divine revelation could not be confined to a single tribe or nation. Its blessings and its penalties must be extended to all others. There may have been other revelations; but this, the latest and the most immediate, must have a yet wider sway and more constraining power. He must go forth in the faith of the Divine Unity to convert not the idolatrous sons of Ishmael alone, but the Jew and

the Christian who had each perverted the revelation made to them. He must preach (with the sword, if need be, and on the battle-field) that there is no God but God, and Mahomet is the prophet of God.

Thus, putting aside the questions of its merits or shortcomings, we have before us the promulgation of a new religion whose apostle and founder claimed for himself a direct commission from heaven, and announced his words as the immediate utterances of the Almighty. In him was centred the spiritual and temporal power. He was their ruler on earth because he was their prophet; and his Koran or Book would remain through all their fortunes for the infallible guidance of the faithful. External evidence he produced not, nor did he seek for it. His religion proclaimed its own power. The Koran attested its own excellence. It was in itself a greater miracle than any other. It professed to be at once a catholic faith and a temporal code, to advance the spiritual life as well as to establish the political supremacy of his countrymen. In one person therefore were combined the offices of temporal judge and priest, or rather teacher, for the system of Islam repressed or rejected the ordinary notions of sacrifice and mediation.

Al Koran.

How much of reality was there in all this? Was the system of Mahomet an actual revelation, or

was it an impudent fabrication from materials already in his hands? If it was an imposture, was that imposture an unconscious or a deliberate one, or was it a mingling of various elements? Was the evident sincerity and earnestness of one portion sullied by the as manifest deceit of another? Was the mighty work thus achieved a blessing or a curse to those who followed him? Did it purify their morality and advance their civilisation, or keep back a fairer and more legitimate developement? If again it was an imposture, what were its sources, and how far did he avail himself of them? What were the influences at work to mould it rather in one form than in another? Were the professed Abrahamic traditions of the Ishmaelites a real relic of primeval history, or a more recent importation by Jewish fugitives scattered on the overthrow of the Holy City? What amount of influence did the various religious systems around him exercise on that which he promulgated as the faith of Islam? How far was he acquainted with the Scriptures of the Jews or Christians,—how far were the tales of the Koran derived from Talmudic legends and from spurious Christian Gospels? If so, what was his knowledge of the higher and purer teaching of the Hebrew prophets and of the morality of Christ himself? And are we to judge of the Prophet himself as a sincere and single-hearted man, or as from the

Question of the reality of his mission.

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first a crafty schemer and double-minded hypocrite? Or were there several stages in his career, during which the simpler faith and truer convictions of his earlier years were tarnished by the defiling touch of earth-born desires? Did he obey a direct call from heaven, or forge a false commission? or with a real charge to preach to his countrymen did he combine secondary ends of his own? Was he, again, unconscious of these lower motives or fully awake to them? Or did an element of self-deception exist along with the deliberate duping of others? And with his teaching how far was his life in harmony? Was the standard of moral excellence which he exhibited in his own person an advance or a retrogression? By what signs of spirituality did he attest his mission as a teacher sent from God? These are grave and momentous questions which, in the history of Mahometanism, force themselves upon us almost to the exclusion of all others. We may indeed find ample matter for thought in the political history of Mahomet and the conquest of his successors. We may, if we please, trace out the analogies of the rival caliphates with the divided empires of the East and West. But in Mahomet the religious element so completely preponderates; it is so completely as a religious reformer that he wields his colossal power; his appeal is so uniformly to the hearts and consciences of

his followers, that it would be an unworthy evasion to treat these essential and most prominent features as practically subordinate. The real history of man must resolve itself into the history of his religion; and not less certain is it that the history of his religion involves that of civilisation in every form. Researches into the ancient history of the Arabian tribes will undoubtedly tend to determine their exact condition at the time of the birth of Mahomet, to show the degree in which he would be likely to influence them, the extent to which he may have been influenced himself, the force of Jewish or Christian or heathen prejudices and associations in the formation of his whole character. But the questions of the genuineness or the falsehood of his call, the imposture or truth of his revelation, will still remain, and can only be answered by a direct analysis of its purely religious elements. Nor is it possible to accomplish this task so long as terms are used without exact definition by writers who profess to institute comparisons between conflicting religious systems and the merits of their respective founders. If they are to be compared at all, and if theological terms are to be introduced into the discussion, the truth of historical criticism imperatively requires that the evidence on which the comparison is instituted should be produced and all equivocation and ambiguity of phrase carefully avoided. The historian

must fairly convince himself that he has data equally trustworthy in both cases, that he has the same means and uses the same method in judging of life and teaching in one case as in the other. As it is, a lamentable confusion or indefiniteness of terms threatens to render the controversy endless. Writers representing the most opposite schools of thought have come forward as opponents of the creed and practice of Islam, of Bouddha, and of Brahma. Agreeing in the main in the employment of certain phrases, they claim the high sanction of inherent requirements of the human mind and heart for ideas which they affirm to be set forth by those terms. It is thus that the representatives of almost every form of Christian belief have assailed the prophet of Islam as denying the doctrines of mediation and atonement, of sacrifice and repentance; and yet by every one of these words each probably, so far as he has analysed them at all, means things far removed from the ideas set forth by the rest under the same terms, if not altogether opposed to them. 'Such terms,' says Professor Max-Müller 'as *Nature, Law, Freedom, Necessity, Body, Substance, Matter, Church, State, Revelation, Inspiration, Knowledge, Belief*, are tossed about in the war of words as if everybody knew what they meant, and as if everybody used them in exactly the same sense; whereas most people, and particularly those who

represent public opinion, pick up these complicated terms as children, beginning with the vaguest conceptions, adding to them from time to time, perhaps correcting likewise at haphazard some of their involuntary errors, but never taking stock, never either inquiring into the history of the terms which they handle so freely, or realising the fullness of their meaning according to the strict rules of logical definition.'[1] The impossibility is obvious of instituting with such equivocations of language any fair historical comparison between two such systems as Christianity and Mahometanism: and no such comparison has been undertaken by any writer who has first defined with exactness the meaning which he attaches to the theological terms of which he may make use, and stated the precise difference between his own notions and those which other thinkers or writers set forth under the same terms.

Genuineness of the Koran.

But even if our terms have been fairly analysed and accurately defined, we have yet to determine how far we are in a position to form a judgment, whether we have the same degree or at least the same kind of knowledge or the means of acquiring it in the one case as in the other; and the historian who would compare the life and teaching of Mahomet with that of Christ must weigh in an accurate balance

[1] *Lectures on Language*, Second Series, p. 527.

the historical value of the Gospels with Christian tradition on the one side, and of the Koran with Mahometan tradition on the other. The latter part of this task has been accomplished by Mr. Muir in a manner which may fairly be termed exhaustive. The several canons which he lays down exhibit almost uniformly the same impartial accuracy and supply sure and sound tests for distinguishing historical fact from legend or falsehood. His conclusion, with which Dean Milman has expressed his substantial agreement, is that 'every verse in the Koran as we now have it is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mahomet himself,'[1] and that 'by this standard we may fairly judge his life and actions, for it *must* represent either what he actually thought or that which he desired to appear as thinking.' It follows that the Koran is placed in a totally different position from the New Testament. It is true that the authority claimed by the Mahometans for the Koran is precisely that which has by many been claimed for the Bible. But between the two there is this vast, nay infinite difference, that this authority was claimed for the Koran by its author, that no such authority is claimed by the Bible. The Mahometan claim is therefore strictly in accordance with the will of

[1] *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. p. 27.

their teacher; the claim for the Bible is the after-growth of centuries.

If, however, the Koran furnishes full and conclusive evidence of the belief and teaching of the prophet of Islam, we have not the same assurance as to the extent and power of the several influences which moulded it. His own assertion, that the whole revelation was imparted to him from God through the medium of the holy spirit Gabriel, will convince none but his followers. The most cursory perusal of the Koran will lay bare the strangely heterogeneous nature of its contents; but it is not so easy to decide from what sources they are borrowed. Mahomet always professed himself unable to write and urged his general want of learning as a proof of the miraculous descent of the Koran. The former statement may or may not be true; the latter is at once as completely refuted by the whole character of the Suras as is his pretended deficiency in the poetic faculty. Of the three foreign elements, Jewish, Christian and Pagan, which are found in them, the last is obviously derived from the Arab traditions which grew up round the Kaaba; but whether he had more than mere tradition as a guide to his acquaintance with Judaism and Christianity and of the narratives taken from the Old and New Testaments, still remains a perplexing question. Arabian tradition, on

Materials of the Koran.

these points scarcely conclusive, affirms that Khadijah was well acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures before her husband entered on his office;[1] and it would seem that Wâraca, who was consulted by Mahomet as well as by his wife, professed Christianity. That he must have received directly from Jewish informants a vast number not only of Biblical but also of Talmudic traditions, the pages of the Koran leave us in no doubt whatever; but his opportunities of conversing with or hearing Christian teachers would appear to have been very rare. On this point the statements of Mr. Muir, clear and harmonious as they generally are, are not altogether consistent. In his review of the Pre-islamite History, he says that 'Christianity was well known; living examples of it there were among the native tribes; the New Testament was respected, if not reverenced, as a book that claimed to be divine; in most quarters it was easily accessible, and some of its facts and doctrines were admitted without dispute.'[2] Again, in the annual fair at Ocatz, which Mahomet attended in his childhood and youth, Mr. Muir says that 'the Christianity as well as the chivalry of Arabia had her representatives, and, if we may believe tradition, Mahomet while a boy heard Coss, the Bishop of Najran, preach a purer

[1] Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, vol. ii. p. 66, *note*.
[2] Ibid. vol. i. p. 139.

creed than that of Mecca in accents pregnant with deep reason and fervid faith, which agitated and aroused his soul.'[1] Elsewhere, however, he affirms that 'his sources of Christian information were singularly barren and defective,' and that 'we do not find a single ceremony or doctrine of Islam in the slightest degree moulded or even tinged by the peculiar tenets of Christianity, while Judaism, on the contrary, has given its colour to the whole system, and lent to it the shape and type, if not the actual substance, of many ordinances.'[2] For this last fact there may have been a more constraining reason than mere deficiency or imperfection of knowledge.

The apparently slender influence of Christianity may be accounted for as readily by the consciousness (which he must have possessed) of the complete antagonism of his whole system at least to the popular Christianity of the time as by a reference to the perpetual wranglings of Monophysite and Monothelite controversies. But that the Jewish and Christian legends, found throughout the Koran, were obtained altogether from oral information and in no part from written documents, a close examination renders it hard to believe. The legends are far too long and too complicated, the verbal resemblances to passages

[1] Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, vol. ii. p. 7.
[2] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 289.

in the Old and New Testaments far too close to admit of such a supposition. That Mahomet had access to some common written sources of the spurious Gospels, if not to that of St. Luke, seems as clear as that he was acquainted with the books of the Pentateuch. That his mistakes and misconceptions are frequent and sometimes absurd, does but add to the likelihood that he was dealing with written documents. The Koran is supposed not merely to speak of Gabriel as the Holy Spirit, but to represent the Trinity of the Christians as consisting of the Father, Jesus, and Mary. But although in one of the Medina Suras he expressly reprobates the doctrine of the Trinity, Mr. Muir thinks that from the extent to which Mariolatry was already carried 'Mahomet might possibly censure the Christians for this, as taking Jesus and his mother for two Gods without adverting to the Trinity.'[1] With this conscious antagonism to the popular Christianity of the day, it is in no way surprising that his references to Christian doctrines in general occur so rarely or that he should so misapprehend and misrepresent them; while the casual agreement of the Koran with some expressions of Christ himself seems to prove is acquaintance with written Gospels more forcibly than most considerations avail on the other side. Two or three instances may be all that can

[1] *Life of Mahomet*, vol. ii. p. 311.

be adduced, but their scantiness does not militate against this conclusion, since but for inadvertence they would probably never have been admitted. It is not easy to believe that mere hearsay could have led him to declare that 'Verily the nearest of kin unto Abraham are they who follow him;'[1] and that 'though we had sent down angels unto them and the dead had spoken unto them and we had gathered before them all things into one view, they would not have believed.'[2] His misapprehension as to the Incarnation would seem to be wilful, as to the Eucharist involuntary; but his assertion that the name John was specially invented for the Baptist seems a strong proof that he had before him a copy of the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. An oral informant (if a Christian, probably; if a Jew, certainly) would at once have told him that Johanan was a name by no means unknown to the pages of the Old Testament.

On the whole, it is impossible to deny that there are points of affinity between the protest of Mahomet against the traditional systems of his age and the great protest of the age of Luther against Latin sacerdotalism. The effect which the teaching of Mahomet may have had on his own followers is not immediately connected with the history of

Points of affinity between the protest of Mahomet and that of Luther.

[1] Sura III. [2] Sura IV.

Latin or Teutonic Christianity. To them it may have been beneficial or hurtful; but if no such protest had been made, we can scarcely doubt that those developements of Latin Christianity which most repel the Teutonic mind would long since have attained the gigantic proportions which seem to justify the fears widely felt of the results of the Council now assembled under Pius the Ninth

CHAPTER III.

EASTERN AND WESTERN MONACHISM.

MONASTICISM and the Papacy are two distinct powers. The course of their fortunes seems now to be diverging indefinitely; and the main prop of earlier pontiffs appears but little to uphold the waning glory of the popedom. But for at least a thousand years their fortunes were inextricably united. With the rise or the degeneracy of the great orders also rose and fell the dignity and power of the popes; and with a true instinct the successors of St. Peter took into their special favour the men whom they knew to be the chief bulwarks and champions of their supremacy. And in its turn, the character of the popes, or rather of their designs, and the condition of their spiritual empire, exercised a corresponding influence on the Monastic Orders. The vast interval which separates the disciples of Loyola from those of Dominic and Francis points to a distinction not less great between the Papacy under Innocent III. and the Papacy after the great ecclesiastical revolution of the West. Almost from the pontificate of Innocent himself, the temporal head of

Connexion between the Popes and the Monastic Orders.

the heavenly empire of Augustine began to sink more and more into the secular prince, in proportion as pretensions not less arrogant were enforced by a weaker will and a more interested policy. The 'seventy years' captivity' at Avignon converted the popes into mere instruments in the treacherous intrigues of French kings. Later generations saw in them simply men who sought by family alliances to secure their greatness as temporal princes, and to whom the welfare of the Church was as nothing in the balance. It is a fit retribution that the spiritual power, when restricted to men of Italian birth, should forfeit the greatness which pontiffs of other races had strengthened, if not created,—that the throne which has been filled by many an illustrious pontiff of the Teutonic race, Suidger and Bruno, Otto, and the English Nicholas, should become contemptible when confined to men of Italian birth, destitute alike of the mental and moral strength which distinguished Gregory and Hildebrand, Benedict and Columban.

Monasticism a philosophy and a religion.

No simple image of ideal purity, from which all characteristic marks have been effaced, is evoked by the mention of these great names. Power and weakness, charity and intolerance, tenderness and cruelty, justice and iniquity, might appear to have been combined more or less in all. It might be

thought that contradictions most frequent and most momentous are visible in the whole fabric of monasticism, and that it owes its chief strength to the fact that it is so seemingly harmonious, so really inconsistent. But no prejudiced opinions can be a fair introduction to a subject which not only involves the analysis of personal character, but may lead us on, if we will, into the very depths of theological argument. Monasticism is not merely a method of life, it is a philosophy, it is even a religion: and the examination of this its real, if not avowed, pretension would soon engage us in a fruitless strife of tongues, if we permitted ourselves to approach the question in any such spirit of controversy. It is possible that the question is one of those which admit of no settlement; but it is quite certain that it cannot be settled by an appeal to isolated texts whether of the Old Testament or the New, or to decrees of Councils or the spirit of patristic theology.

Popular misconceptions.

It is not surprising that the modern popular notions of monastic life should be as imperfect or as absurd as the popular notions of Greek or Roman civilisation or philosophy. Yet there is something almost ludicrous, after a patient study of the career of Lanfranc or Bernard, of Boniface or Columban, to hear the monastic state spoken of as a mere refuge for broken hearts and fainting spirits, where the

memory of shattered hopes and crushed affection may be softened into a chronic tranquillity, not cheerful perhaps, yet not intolerable. Disappointment and calamity may in all ages have sent some into the cloister; but the vast majority of those who abandoned what they called the life of the world were made of sterner stuff and ready for harder work than this. In truth, the most prominent characteristic of the Western monks is power. Whether in self-discipline, or in the rule of others, they exhibit no vacillation or feebleness of will. In their devotion there is no mere dreaming: in their meditation no mere inaction. The greatest ascetics become the most vigorous of missionaries; the sternest self-tormentors are the most diligent and successful of teachers. In the most trivial detail they believed that there was a work to be done: the hours of silent contemplation prepared them the better to accomplish it.

Monastic severity and tenderness.

But with this power and force of character were united all other qualities which might win the reverence or the love of mankind. In the full determination of a natural will, with the masculine strength of a vigorous mind, the soldier, to whom the cell was to be as much a battle-field as the world could have been, gave himself solemnly to the life of active prayer and works of mercy. Labouring earnestly in his ceaseless intercession, he was not less

earnest in relieving the physical, still more the spiritual, wants of all around him. To the poor of Christ his gates were always open: for their perplexities his counsel was always ready. The temporal aid, which modern states have been obliged to render compulsory, flowed naturally and spontaneously from an inexhaustible charity. Among his fellows were those who had been kings and chieftains, peasants or slaves; and with him all stood on an absolute equality before God. With them he was united by the rule of an unlimited and unquestioning obedience to a spiritual chief, by an entire renunciation of all worldly goods, down to the very clothes which he wore and the pen with which he wrote. Under the spell of his unwearying labour, savage deserts and unwholesome marshes were changed into blooming gardens and waving corn fields. The peaceful home, on which he lavished every epithet of the most intense affection, became the nucleus of happy homesteads and contented hearths. The hamlets of his dependants clustered peacefully around the great conventual church, which was sometimes the very embodiment of a severe simplicity, more often a storehouse of the highest glories of Christian art. If the fields without bore witness to his bodily industry, his cloister was not less the scene of the most subtle or the most beneficent of intellectual triumphs. From

his cell went forth the letters which were to cheer or counsel the vicar of Christ, to rebuke kings and statesmen, to warn and guide the faithful, to recall the wanderer to the fold, and to confound the unbeliever. The intensity of his meditation did not close his senses to the beauties of earth and heaven, the fragrance of flowers, and the soft murmur of summer breezes. For him the savage storm and the rushing stream had each their lesson, as well as the gentler harmonies of cloudless sky and tranquil water. But his warmest, his absorbing love, was for the brethren who were engaged with himself in the same battle against the weakness and corruption of the flesh, in the same race for an incorruptible crown. To him his friend was as the seal upon his heart. Not less than his words, his silence was expressive of a love which could not be weakened or forgotten. He had no need to forget or to mourn. Death could not part them in the communion of the living and the dead. Their prayers still rose together before the Divine throne; and he could ask the intercession of the brethren for the soul of his friend as though he asked it for his own.[1] Here on earth he had his 'happy home' (beau lieu, joyeux lieu), his 'haven of rest' (bon repos), his 'valley of peace,' from which he was one day to migrate to a haven which no storms may vex,

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 97.

and a valley where no griefs may enter. It is an exquisite picture, and one, doubtless, realised in its general outlines far more frequently than the tone of modern thought may be disposed to admit. Unfortunately, there is scarcely a single feature in this description which does not involve some ambiguity or equivocation of language, or which does not receive its contradiction, even in the most heroic and the most devoted of those whom the eloquent historian of Western Monachism delights to honour as the Chivalry of God.

Phases of monachism.

The truth is, that, as theological controversies are indefinitely lengthened when both parties insist on employing the same word in different senses, so here the examination of monachism can serve no real purpose, as long as we permit certain abstract words to be used on either side without a precise definition. Liberty and faith, charity and religion, prayer and virginity, are terms which may certainly bear more senses than one; and the tacit limitation to one meaning virtually decides the whole question. They are also terms which are special favourites with the great monastic writers; and if, when employed by them, they sometimes express what is absolutely false, more frequently they have a meaning which is partially true. In other words, monachism, whether in the East or West, is no compact and harmonious whole. In every stage

of its course, except perhaps the earliest, it exhibits the working of conflicting and irreconcileable ideas. It has its repulsive and attractive phases; but, as in the architecture of Teutonic Christendom, its grandest developements are found in the periods of transition.

Yet under the greatest outward contrasts there is a close and inseparable connexion between all the forms through which it has passed. One common characteristic binds together the learned Benedictine and the savage hermit who gloried in his ignorance. One feature at least there is in common between Clugny and Citeaux in the days of their glory and the anchorites who peopled the deserts of the Thebais. In this one common feature is to be found, as I believe, the essence of monachism: but it is a bond which immediately connects the highest form of that life with the earliest and the most remote philosophy of the East. This unbroken connexion M. de Montalembert has very clearly perceived. To him, as to almost everyone else, the great type of the mediæval monk is St. Bernard. In him is to be found the sternest asceticism, the warmest affection, the deepest humility united with the mightiest power and the most imperious authority. But, in the power and the majesty of St. Bernard, we see simply the result of the great battle which had been fought and

Connexion of monachism with Eastern philosophy.

won by Hildebrand and Peter Damiani, while these, in their turn, were but disciples of the first Gregory, and he of Benedict. But between Benedict and Bernard there was little superficial resemblance. Between Benedict and Antony, with the swarms who after him overran the Egyptian solitudes, there is, at least in the early portion of his history, almost an identity. And again, between the Christian monks of Nitria and the Therapeutæ of the older faith, the Essenes of Judea, and the monks who held the creed of Zoroaster and of Bouddha, there is the same absolute and essential harmony. Undoubtedly on these earliest Egyptian anchorites Christianity had impressed something of its own character—had imparted some ideas not known to the earliest systems. But the outward results were the same: the spiritual condition, so far as we may judge of it, not very different.

The admission of this connexion, even if it be not held to prove that Christian and Bouddhistic monachism is one and the same system and grounded on the same philosophy, must at the least prove that the strict type, and consequently the most legitimate form of monasticism is not that of the monk in the stately Benedictine or Cistercian convent, but of the solitary anchorite in his inaccessible cell. And, accordingly, true to the real monastic instinct,

True type of monachism.

M. de Montalembert has as keen an admiration, if not a more fervent tribute, for the hermit who chained himself to a rock or stood upright for months and years, as for the greatest scholars and theologians who adorned the monasteries of the middle ages.

Either, then, Christian monachism is one and the same with the earliest monastic system of the East, or in some or all of its developements it has acquired from Christianity a character peculiarly its own. It is only fair and just that this difference should be measured by the degree in which it stands apart from heathen monachism in its appearance and results, whether external or internal. Where these are the same, we are compelled to conclude that Christianity has made, at least, no appreciable difference. Where the results are so entirely dissimilar that it requires some effort of mind to trace the connexion at all, we can but suppose that some new, and that a most alien element, has been leavening its mass. But in what respect is the monachism of Antony, of Pacomius, and Hilarian different from that of the wildest Oriental fakir? We need not to follow M. de Montalembert in any discussion as to the meaning of particular texts in the Gospel. It may be, perhaps, useless to urge that the command to the rich young man to go and sell all that he had and

Influence of Christianity on monachism

give to the poor is neither a recognition nor a sanction of monastic life; or that to this system is to be referred the manifold blessings promised in this world as well as in the next to those who, for the sake of Christ, have given up their home and kindred.[1] But that vision must be strangely perverted which can discern in the loathsome exhibitions of Egyptian anchoritism the slightest congruity with the general characteristics of the New Testament, or connect the Christianity of St. Paul with a system which contradicts or ignores all its most positive and solemn precepts, and really fulfils not one.

Identity of idea between Christian and other forms of monachism.

It remains, then, to be seen whether Christianity laid down for monachism a really new basis, and, if so, at what time this new character is first discernible, or how far it affects its subsequent history, or whether the foundation of the system—whether amongst Christians or heathens—is in its ultimate essence the same. We have in the following words of M. de Montalembert, the reason for believing it to be the latter:—

'This life of solitude and privations,' he says, in distinguishing between the natural and supernatural origin of monachism, 'apparently so contrary to human inclination, has its roots in human nature. All men, at some moment of their lives,

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 45.

have felt this mysterious and powerful attraction towards solitude. All have recognised and honoured it: all religions have adopted and sanctioned it. Pagan philosophers and moralists have abundantly extolled this impulse of nature: the Eastern world has followed it passionately. India for three thousand years has had its ascetics, who push to frenzy the science of mortification and the practice of voluntary chastisements. They are to be found still, wandering through the world, or living in vast communities, among all the nations who recognise the law of Bouddha. But they have produced nothing, they have saved nothing. The pride of error, and the corruption of idleness have made them useless to the soul of man as well as to society; but in their very self-abnegation they bear an undying witness to this profound instinct of the soul, which the only true religion has transformed into an inexhaustible source of virtue and beneficence.'[1]

This natural instinct which, if left to itself, must issue in the most irregular and fantastic results, Christianity has sanctioned, by subjecting it to the discipline of a strict law, and by imparting to it a motive and an end unknown to the heathen systems. But on this hypothesis, on which M. de Montalembert manifestly rests the

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 41.

final defence of monachism,[1] the admission is inevitable that the groundwork of the system in all its forms is one and the same. A closer examination may therefore not only enable us better to understand his meaning, but to lay bare some of the fallacies which are necessary for the proof of his position that monachism is the perfection of the Christian life,[2] the very idea of Christian humanity.[3]

This position resolves itself into two or three general statements, for none of which does any adequate support appear to be forthcoming. For the foundation of the earliest Oriental monachism, M. de Montalembert assigns a principle in which it certainly did not originate; and this principle he unconsciously modifies, when he has to speak of its Christian developements. Probably at no period has the love of solitude been the permanent motive for the adoption of the monastic life: it unquestionably was not and is not so with the monks of India or Thibet. The love of solitude is in them wholly subordinate to the one absorbing principle which has served as the basis of every form of Oriental philosophy and religion. The absolute and hopeless corruption of matter, the possible purification of spirit, left no alternative to those who desired

Love of solitude not the original source of Eastern monachism.

[1] *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. pp. 14–26.

[2] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 11.

[3] Ibid. vol. i. p. 299.

to escape from the one to the other. The disciple of Bouddha never assumed, with Christian theologians, that material corruption was the effect of moral disobedience. Matter to him was the absolute evil, not as having been defiled by a perverted use, but as being in itself the work of an evil god, the principle of defilement to everything associated with it. To depart into a desert, to devise the most ingenious torments, to crush every human instinct, might be a natural impulse to one who regarded his body as a foul prison-house which alone withheld him from immediate union with an absolute and eternal purity. But both the solitude and the self-torment were mere means and instruments for the attainment of the one passionate longing for self-annihilation. Nor would an abstract love of solitude furnish a more adequate explanation of the early form of Egyptian anchoritism. The monk of Nitria fled from every human haunt, not so much because solitude was essential to his being, but because amidst human society he could not preserve unsullied the treasure of virginity,—the one idea which, so far as we may see, Christianity seems as yet to have infused into the monastic theory. For the monks of the West it can even less fairly be considered as the one constraining motive. It would be strange if it were so with men who were manifestly actuated by many vehement and conflicting

impulses. For Bernard and Peter Damiani matter was corrupt no less than to the Oriental hermit; for them also solitude had its charms not less than for the latter. Both alike underwent their self-inflicted penances for the annihilation or the salvation of their souls. But for the mediæval monk other elements had crept in which greatly modified the ideal of his vocation. He was the member of a society, the soldier of an army, which was to fight the battles of the King of kings. He was the knight sheathed in the impenetrable armour of the Spirit, and he bore in his hand the invincible sword of faith. He had learnt the language, and transferred to his monastic life, the images and terms of feudalism. To him action was everything; solitude with its essential idea of rest was in comparison of this as nothing. He fled from his home to the cloister, because he could there fight better against material and spiritual corruption. He chose the most severe schools which he could find for the exercise of his self-discipline. He withdrew from these into wilder deserts, if they failed to meet his ideal of self-mortification. He established a *reform*, if existing rules appeared to him too indulgent to human weakness. Thus not merely the rapid growth of Western monasticism, but the marvellous power of self-renovation which it exhibits through the whole course of its history, are owing

to motives which are utterly alien to the monachism of the East,—to motives which may more strictly be called Teutonic, but which eminently harmonise with the general spirit and working of Christianity. But, further, we may question the universal existence of this physical impulse towards a solitary life, or its cogency, even if we grant its existence. In a matter such as this each man must answer for himself, although in fairness it must be admitted that a life habitually thoughtless and frivolous renders him incompetent to be a judge. But it is rash to infer its general existence among men of a higher stamp from its prevalence amongst others whose thoughts, from education or association, run more or less in the same course. Such a feeling must arise in all who have come to think of absorbing meditations on the Divine Nature as a sovereign remedy for the unregulated love of the creature, or who have imbibed a mysterious reverence for holy virginity.[1] But even for these it may be doubted whether 'the human origin and natural explanation of the monastic vocation . . . spring from a profound and deliberate, though sometimes a precocious, sentiment of the vanity of human things, and of the constant discomfiture of truth and goodness on the earth.' Had this impulse predominated more, it must have filled the monasteries with

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 14.

crowds of those fainting hearts and feeble spirits whose profession, compared to that of men of more commanding character, was, as M. de Montalembert insists, 'infinitely rare.'[1] But assuredly there have been forms of thought and civilisation in which such an impulse seems to have been nearly, if not absolutely, unknown. The intense humanity of the Greek, which invested all his deities with the attributes and passions of man, left no room for a sentiment alien to his whole life and thoughts. He could not fly into solitude, for the wilderness was to him peopled with its own inhabitants, who had for him no vague and mysterious terrors. Nor can we see the working of this impulse in the sect or fraternity of the Pythagoræans, whom, with many of the prophets as well as with the Rechabites of the Old Testament, M. de Montalembert regards as leading and advocating the life of the cloister. Of the Pythagoræans we know so little that to them it might have been wiser to omit all reference; but, whatever amount of religious elements may have entered into their association, assuredly they renounced neither property nor political influence. They may perhaps be called members of a guild; it is merely unreasonable to identify them with any form of monastic life. The Rechabites, it

[1] *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 81.

might be urged, are spoken of as an hereditary nomadic clan; but their history or discipline does not affect the question. The monastic element and influence were active enough in Palestine before the birth of Christ; and the images so frequently drawn in His teaching from the marriage rite are entirely abhorrent to the spirit of the Essene philosophy. But from the existence of such an impulse, even if it be admitted, it is very doubtful whether any inference may be justified of its cogency or its truth. The impulses of humanity, which, not less than this alleged attraction towards solitude, deserve the epithet of natural, are so many and various that a similar justification of all would lead to strange results. The impulse to solitude may be preceded or followed by impulses to a life of warfare, or of marriage, or any other. M. de Montalembert admits this impulse to be not merely natural, but temporary; nor would he have assigned to it a higher positive value if its results had not harmonised with a preconceived idea of the highest form of Christianity. The Abbé Huc indulges in a similar strain of reasoning on the Tartar love of pilgrimages. Their incessant religious wanderings furnish him with conclusive proof that, far more than European Christians, they realise their condition as strangers and sojourners on the earth. To the profane it might appear that the old

nomadic impulse had received simply a new direction.

Thus, having assigned as the basis of the earliest Oriental monachism this mysterious attraction to solitude in place of that conviction of the absolute impurity of matter which alone made solitude a natural refuge, M. de Montalembert proceeds with greater ease to fill up the outlines of his picture. For the reason already given, Egyptian anchoritism presents to him no difficulty. Antony and the swarms of solitaries who clustered round him in the desert were by their withdrawal from social and family life 'nearer to God and the Divine Mediator who had so recently shed His blood on Calvary.'[1] The dazzling example of their piety recruited their ranks with an endless succession of devotees who outnumbered the populations of large cities. They hurried into the desert, as M. de Montalembert believes, not so much from a motive of repulsion at the frightful dissoluteness of all existing society, not so much from utter despair at the hopeless horrors which filled the Roman world, as from an attraction to the specially Christian sanctity of these Egyptian eremites. In them they beheld marvellous examples of utter self-renunciation, of men who had subdued every evil passion and depraved desire, whose love embraced all mankind, whose prayer

Egyptian anchorites.

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 49.

was as constant as it was fervent, whose whole life was a realisation of heaven. There the vehemence of Antony was eclipsed by the austerities of Pacomius, who for fifteen years slept either in an upright posture or barely supported on a projection of rock. There Macarius evinced his holiness by standing for six months in a morass, with his naked body exposed to the sting of African insects strong enough to pierce the hide of a boar. There this same Macarius, as he hurled the bunch of grapes into the lake, gave thanks to God for the self-denial of his monks who had passed the gift round to the whole community and left it finally untouched. From these deserts the monastic life flowed back in a vast surge on the Egyptian cities; and the town of Oxyrynchus alone could boast ten thousand monks and twenty thousand maidens consecrated to God. But self-subjection and starvation had not dried up the springs of their human sympathy. To all but to themselves none could be more tender and forbearing.[1] Never was hospitality more generous, or Christian charity more universal. Nay, this very self-maceration did but impart to them more fully the secret of love for their neighbour.[2] In the East, the self-tortures of the monks had gone even further. If men like Basil and his friend Gregory were examples of a

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 73.
[2] Ibid. vol. i. p. 72.

less exalted type, Simeon from the summit of his pillar for eight and forty years edified the crowds who thronged around its base not more by his preaching than by the wonderful skill which bent his forehead till it touched his feet. In the West, the smouldering ashes had been kindled into flame by the eloquence and the example of Athanasius. During one of his many banishments from his archiepiscopal city, he had admired in retirement the virtues which the hermits of the Thebais practised in seclusion. Unconscious of this vast difference between himself and them, while from his cell he wrote the letters and treatises which kept the whole Roman empire in a fever of excitement, he fancied that he was conforming to the very ideal of the sternest asceticism. By the magic of his name and of his teaching the mighty impulse was given which sent high-born youths and maidens, the descendants of the old Fabii, and Claudii, and Anicii, to a life of penitence and prayer at Bethlehem. There Jerome, perhaps the most eloquent, certainly the most vehement advocate of the monastic life, united a sterner self-discipline with an intellectual activity not less than that of Athanasius. And while Jerome drew his spiritual colony of Roman matrons and virgins to the hallowed scenes of the Saviour's life and sufferings, Ambrose was infusing fresh life into the monasticism of the West. From him through Augustine was

concentrated the direct influence of monasticism on the theology and constitution of the Church: from him emanated the vision which Augustine embodied in his City of God, and which the Papacy sought to realise first in its purer, then in a more earthly form. Further to the North, the same impulse had been received and imparted by St. Martin of Tours: and the wildest recesses of Gaul began to be peopled by fervent hermits whose self-mortification sought only for a fare more scanty than that which kept in life the eremites of Egypt.[1] From the cell of Horonatus in the little island of Lerins issued a succession not merely of ascetics but of learned doctors and prelates. But, while the philosophy of Cassianus was drawing down some suspicion on the convent of St. Victor at Marseilles, a more oriental form of monachism was exhibited in the ruder districts of Gaul. Gregory of Tours encountered near Trêves a monk who used the summit of a pillar for the more practical purpose of converting the heathen who flocked to hear him. Another passed his life in a cavern, a prey to ecstasies and diabolical temptations. Another, discovered by shepherds on the crest of a rock, would not suffer them to approach him, but gave them his benediction as they knelt at the base of the cliff. In the heights of the Jura, Romanus found a lurking place amidst

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i. p. 221.

impenetrable rocks and thickets where he hoped that no human eye might see him. His brother Lupicinus found means to track him, and with him established the great monastery of Condat. On a neighbouring rock their sister governed five hundred virgins, who, once cloistered, never emerged except for burial. In this wild retreat all were satisfied but Lupicinus. His soul loathed their light austerities. Into one caldron he threw a meal of fish and vegetables which the monks were preparing separately with some neatness and care: and twelve of the brethren left the convent in indignation. 'Better were it for thee not to have come here,' said Romanus, 'than thus to drive away our monks.' 'It matters not,' was his reply; 'it is the chaff separating itself from the wheat. God has no portion in them.'

Thus, from the Rhone to the Danube, from Sicily to Northern Gaul, the monastic institute was spreading. Its growth was rapid but irregular. The abbeys were isolated units, with no common tie or centre of action. If the monks were to carry the world through the dissolution of the old Society, if they were to gather into the fold of the Church the wild barbarians who passed in successive inundations over Europe, if in these savages they were to find the special instruments for establishing a more vigorous and a more Christian civilisation, it could

Organisation of monachism.

only be by assuming for themselves the compact organisation of an army. It was a momentous crisis, and the crisis produced Benedict. Seldom perhaps have mighty results been attained by one who so little anticipated or even intended them. He hurried to his hiding place in the rocks of Subiaco, not thinking that he was raising up a bulwark for his country against barbarous invaders, still less dreaming of or even wishing for the proud intellectual pre-eminence destined for the future houses of his rule. He buried himself for three years in his cave for the salvation of his own soul. The salvation of others brought him forth at the end of this time to inspire them with the love of God. His fame spread: it brought him disciples, it plunged him into danger. Degenerate monks, who had invited his direction, sought to poison him. The jealousy of an immoral priest exposed his comrades to fleshly temptations. Benedict escaped unscathed through all. For his own rebellious desires the sharp thorns on which he rolled his bare body furnished an adequate remedy. From the treachery of others a deliverance by miracle never failed him. From the temptation of the wicked priest he withdrew himself and his disciples to the distant home on which was to rise the famous monastery of Monte Cassino. The spell of his name was growing powerful. All ranks and ages crowded to make

their profession at his feet. From all, whether noble or peasant, rich or poor, he required the same self-renunciation, the same absolute obedience; on all he enforced the same unbending discipline. But his strong sense taught him to repress austerities in excess of the rule. A brother had fastened himself to a rock by a chain. 'If thou art really a servant of God,' said Benedict, 'restrain thyself not by a chain of iron but by the chain of Christ.' The rebuke was just, but it contained a principle subversive of the whole idea of monasticism.

In this retreat, of which the magnificent natural beauty had for him no charm, Benedict gave himself to the work of preaching, as well as to the government of his monks. Nor was he less, in dearth and famine, the temporal stay of the poor around his monastery. The celebrated hospitality of his order has its consecrating legend in a miraculous supply of corn left at the gates, when he had rebuked the monks for complaining that only five loaves remained for the support of the whole community. Awed by his majesty, the savage, who came to plunder or slay, abandoned his purpose, even if he did not acknowledge his sin; and Totila himself listened patiently to the rebukes and the predictions of Benedict.

Benedict of Nursia.

His rule was well calculated to promote the strength and efficiency of his order. The act of profession was the last free exercise of a personal will permitted to the monk. Henceforth he was but a reasoning instrument in the hands of an absolute master. The employment of every hour was minutely mapped out and strictly enforced. Manual labour was imposed as a duty on all. He who had the skill might receive permission to exercise a trade; but the first symptom of pride in artistic merit was the signal for substituting some other trade of which he knew nothing. To his obedience, as far as it concerned himself, there was to be no limit; it was held to extend even to impossibilities. The only real check to this despotic power of the superior was his own sense of duty. He had sworn to order nothing but what was in uniformity with the Divine law. His authority was paternal and pastoral; and in all difficult cases he was to look on his brethren as fellow counsellors, not as subjects. Still in the chapter of the convent he possessed on all questions the right of final decision. No monarchy could be in appearance more irresponsible: but its practical working was always more or less democratic. The check which the collective will of the monks placed upon the arbitrary exercise of abbatial power was the same in kind with that of the

Benedictine rule.

nobles on the despotism of their feudal sovereigns. For the perpetuity of this organisation, an irrevocable vow and an absolute renunciation of all property were alike imperatively necessary. The institution could stand at best only on a precarious footing, if the brethren might depart from any passing caprice or whim. Unity of aim and purpose could not exist, so long as the smallest fraction of property remained withdrawn from the common store. Benedict acted therefore with a strong practical sense in making these two acts the indispensable conditions for affiliation into his order. Hitherto the vows taken by monks had always been regarded as to a certain extent conditional; and their secular garments were carefully kept to meet the possible contingence of their departure. But any such uncertainty was inadmissible in a community, which, although calling itself the Order of the Peacemakers (Ordo Pacificorum), was essentially aggressive, and which was to pursue its victorious path in the noblest of all warfares against heathenism and ungodliness.

In this constitution of incessant labour, of absolute obedience, of severe penances, even to scourging for the smallest faults, it is obvious that the mind of Benedict had no visions of intellectual greatness such as animated Cassiodorus in his beautiful Calabrian retreat.

Gregory the Great.

But the absence of any provision for the encouragement of learning perhaps better prepared his society to pass through the fiery ordeal of the Lombard invasions, which destroyed their convent at Monte Cassino and compelled the order to take refuge in Rome. Still more its firm organisation attracted into the monastic army the first monk who sat on the throne of St. Peter. Gregory the Great, from the peculiar strength of his character and from his determined energy in the pursuit of the ends proposed to himself, was a man fully equal to the crisis which threatened to submerge the Papacy, unless the Pope should practically seize the prerogatives of the Western emperors, and, with these, a power which had long since escaped from their grasp. Throughout a life of intense activity Gregory continued a monk; and his true instinct pointed out to him the special dangers arising from an imperfect or weak monastic constitution. His toleration for the heretic or the Jew was combined with an inexorable severity to the monk who retained in his possession a piece of money. With the unwavering courage of a man who fears nothing and desires nothing for himself, he opposed kings and confronted nations. The same devotion for the cause of the Church led him into his only crimes. Two nations owed to him their faith, and with it their civilisation; and before his death

the foundations were firmly laid of that spiritual empire and supremacy, which Hildebrand was afterwards to sully, while he extended it.

Throughout their history Benedict and Gregory come before us with a strongly defined personality. If legend has been busy with the story of the former, it has not put out of sight the character of the man. No such distinct image attaches to the early annals of monasticism in Spain. Between Leander (a monk of Seville and bishop of the same see) and Gregory there subsisted a close friendship. Leander's brother, Isidore, assumed likewise the monastic habit and succeeded to his metropolitan throne. Their sister Florentina received from them a rule for the guidance of her nuns, and for their preservation from all contact with lay women, who are mere seirens and instruments of Satan.[1] The more popular name of Ildefonsus is adorned with a few tales of monastic charity and a few legends of familiarity with brute creatures which form a more important feature in the monastic annals of Gaul. But both here and in the dominion of the Merovingians, the picture is indistinct and merely negative. From Monte Cassino, Benedict sent his disciple Maurus to propagate his rule in the North; but St. Maur, whose name has been ren-

Spanish monachism.

[1] Montalembert, *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. ii. pp. 197-8.

dered famous by a more recent society, vanishes in the mists of legend as soon as he has arrived in the land where the monastic life already flourished in the Abbeys of Marmoutier and Condat. From a crowd of mere names a more definite character attaches to those of German, Bishop of Auxerre, and Gregory of Tours, whose writings have won for him a more solid reputation. The history, or rather the legend, of Radegonda, if it has any value whatever, can only serve to prove the utter failure of monachism under the Merovingians in the sixth century. But in more remote regions we are introduced to tales of another kind. Solitaries, who shrunk from all contact with humanity, were becoming the unconscious instruments for the conversion and civilisation of savages and heathens. They penetrate valleys choked with rocks, brambles, and brushwood, the overgrowth of generations, interlaced into a barrier not to be penetrated by anything weaker than their untiring energy. They are the sternest of ascetics, and the most isolated of hermits. They delight to inhabit the dens of beasts, who yield them peaceable possession. It is their pride to be mistaken by huntsmen for their legitimate prey, and by the uplifting of the hands in prayer to arrest the weapon aimed at a body which bore the semblance of a brute. Starvation and self-

torment, ecstatic prayer alternating with meditation, and the labour of clearing the choked soil for their slender supply of herbs, make up the circle of their lives. For them the law is suspended which makes savage beasts shrink from man. Animals most untameable approach them in willing familiarity. The buffalo and the bison come for their daily caress, and hurry back to the wilderness or remain to serve as beasts of burden. But their solitude is soon disturbed. The hunter spreads the tale of the strange sight which had almost led him into involuntary murder; or some king or chieftain finds to his wrath that the game of his royal forest has met with a protector whose sanctity he dares not violate. His rest is broken by penitents, who come to ask his blessing and who implore permission to live under his authority. His solitary cell becomes the nucleus of a society, the society a centre of many congregations radiating from it. The little plot for herbs becomes a garden; the hills are clothed with vines, the plain adorned with fruit trees. They are the pioneers of a physical not less than of a moral civilisation. Never were instruments less conscious of the high ends which they were serving; never were high ends more rapidly or effectually achieved.

Such as this is in part the history of St. Co-

lumban, although it speedily developes into the region of political influence and theological controversy. In the person of this Scottish saint the monachism of the South is brought into a contact not altogether harmonious with the monachism of the North, and we are carried to the long struggle which ended in the substitution of the Benedictine rule for that of Columban's more illustrious namesake. If the monastic system of Columba exhibits some of the features which mark the Protestantism of modern times, it seems not the less certain that its continued existence would have been fatal to the growth of all that is most wholesome and vigorous in the society of Teutonic Christendom. Whatever may have been the origin of the ecclesiastical polity under which the earliest churches in Ireland and Britain grew up and flourished, it is clear that to the corporate developement of a nation and to any genuine cultivation of art and science it presented a formidable barrier. If the asceticism which sanctified the cells of Iona and Lindisfarne was as stern and unsparing as that of Simeon Stylites, it must be remembered that the pillared saints have little kindred with the goodly company which numbers the first and the seventh Gregories among its leaders and may point with pride to the achievements of Lanfranc, Anselm, and Aquinas. The rule of Columba was essentially stationary;

Scottish monachism.

and a law immovable as that of the Medes and Persians could issue only in a stunted or petrified civilisation. The victory of Columba or of his disciples might have strengthened that feeling of personal independence which, far from being lost by the most merciless of Eastern ascetics, has perhaps most effectually supported them under their self-maceration; but it must in the sequel have crushed all spontaneous action by the narrowest and the most frigid sectarianism. If at the outset the monks of the Holy Islands seem to take their stand on the ground of reason and the right of personal judgment, their verdict is not the less based on an authority as arbitrary as that of the Roman See and far less flexible. If it be said that Irish and Scottish monachism, extended over a thousand years, would never have given birth to the heresies of Berengar and Abelard, we must not forget that it would have checked or repressed that mighty movement in which Abelard and Berengar took their part, and to which we are indebted for the philosophy of Bacon and Locke, of Copernicus and Isaac Newton. The theories of Pelagius had sprung up and died away before the rule of Columba was promulgated, and Irish monachism had in its turn yielded to the Latin yoke long before Scotus Erigena ventured, in the words of Dean Milman, 'to fathom the very abysses of human thought.'

When we seek to ascertain the real character of this Scottish monasticism, we are confronted with a problem which can by no means be dismissed with any off-hand answer. M. de Montalembert is firmly convinced that the Irish monks were essentially in accord with the doctrinal and ecclesiastical system of the Roman Church, and the signs which seem to point to a different conclusion scarcely arrest his attention or meet his eye. He is sure that the obligation of priestly and clerical celibacy is divinely imposed and universally binding; and we know therefore what his narrative would be of that woful struggle in which the married clergy of Milan fell beneath the onslaught of Peter Damiani and his pitiless supporters. The writer who can stigmatise as concubines the wives of Pietro Vermigli and Martin Luther may have a natural sympathy for the families whose homes were made desolate by the decrees of Hildebrand; but he must represent the pontiff and his abettors as right in the contest, and their opponents as wrong. Few probably would feel this natural compassion more keenly than M. de Montalembert; but a faith which he has never been led to question must lead him to exhibit Pope Gregory as enforcing priestly celibacy purely on the theological grounds which alone imparted to it any merit or meaning in the eyes of Damiani. The same natural feeling would

Difficulties involved in the history of Irish monachism.

find eloquent expression when he comes to tell the story of Abelard and Heloisa; but with him Abelard will be simply a heretic whose errors were met and put down by Bernard, and not a thinker who, like Scotus Erigena, showed men that if their conclusions were wrong, they were yet justified in using the faculty of reason by which alone any personal convictions can be formed. Against the monstrous cruelties of Arnold of Amaury and Peter of Castelnau his sense of equity must utterly revolt; but while his indignation is roused by the crimes of the Albigensian crusaders, his idea of toleration will still leave a loophole for the necessary repression of principles which he regards as hostile to the faith of Christendom.[1]

[1] In propounding a modified theory of persecution M. de Montalembert may claim the support of Dr. Arnold; but his language is not always consistent. If Ethelbert refused to compel his subjects to become Christians, we are to conclude that 'Augustine had impressed on him the incompatibility of all constraint with the service of Christ.' (Vol. iii. p. 367.) But this doctrine still left Ethelbert free to destroy heathen temples, and the ranks of the converts were swelled by some who had made profession of Christianity through fear of Ethelbert or from a wish to gratify him. (Vol. iii. p. 434.) No hint is breathed that the enforcement of the Lenten fast under severe civil penalties was any infraction of this principle. (Vol. iv. p. 106.) In short, M. de Montalembert condemns the king who forces his people to baptism (vol. iv. p. 291); but persons who call themselves Christians may, he thinks, receive benefit from constraints which fall short of torture or bloodshed. (Vol. v. p. 149.) It is to the lasting disgrace, he tells us, of the Church

But the history of Scottish monachism brings before us tales handed down by oral tradition alone for perhaps two or three generations, together with documents and letters as genuine as the despatches of the Duke of Wellington; and thus a narrative of the life and work of the great Scottish monks can be of but little use unless some real effort is made to show that one is more valuable than the other, or to determine where the poetry which is lavish of marvellous incidents ends, and where the region of fact begins. The plea of M. de Montalembert that he has 'had recourse to the supernatural only when the Church commands him, or when a phenomenon cannot be accounted for on natural grounds'[2] carries little weight with those who reject the authority of the Roman Church, or who may wish to know why a method should be applied in one place which is regarded as fallacious in another. To the genuine student of history there is little satisfaction in the alternative of an imperious credulity or an arbitrary

Uncertainty of Scottish traditional history.

of England that she has outstepped these limits, and inflicted on those who would not submit to her yoke either a hopeless captivity or cruelties unheard of even among savages. The accusation may be either wholly or in part deserved; but we cannot ascribe to the Roman Church the meek inoffensiveness of the Hind, even if we see the Panther in the Anglican Establishment.

[1] Vol. i. p. 283.

scepticism. To accept as authentic that portion of a narrative which exhibits little of the marvellous, merely because it is found in juxtaposition with sequences as astounding as those of the 'Arabian Nights' Tales,' is in the judgment of all who wish to know the actual truth of facts a mere walking blindfold among the pitfalls of plausible fiction. To regard the constitution of Servius Tullius as historical because it is as dull as an English Act of Parliament inserted in Jeffrey of Monmouth's romance of King Arthur, argues a discernment not greater than that which dates the beginning of Assyrian history from the period when the lives of the kings begin to be reckoned by decades and not by centuries.

Still less is it satisfactory to read a narrative in which a vague admission, that parts of the tale have a mythical character, serves to introduce a series of marvellous incidents related with all the gravity of history. The caution that the story is not in all respects trustworthy may be forgotten when the author drops no hint that the tale which he is telling may be nothing but a fable or a metaphor translated into fact. The history of the Western monks is a subject worthy of the most patient research and the most dispassionate judgment; and they who seek to know whether the events related took place as they are recorded, or whether they did not, have

Mythical narratives.

a claim on the writer far more pressing than any fancied interests of such as may read wholly or chiefly for edification. For the latter it may be well to multiply legends so long as they point a wholesome moral; the former will think that undue space given to the marvels of mediæval hagiology implies a faith in them which M. de Montalembert seems at times to disavow.

If we regard as a whole the system which this hagiology was designed to uphold and to glorify, we may find it a hard matter to repress the feelings of indignation and scorn. We may despise the mean austerity which condemned men as reprobate because they wished to have their meals decently cooked; we may loathe the ferocity which urged on an indiscriminate massacre with the cry that God would know his own. But it would be foolish to shut our eyes to the singular beauty and tenderness which invests many of these legends with an imperishable charm. The unprejudiced critic who looks on the lives and exploits of ecclesiastical saints as he would on those of Roman and Hellenic heroes, will expect to find them thrown into the most repulsive and the most attractive forms. He will feel that they are portraits drawn to suit ideals of character indefinitely varying from each other, and that they must exhibit the peculiar features produced by differences of time and place, of

Ideal portraits.

society and modes of thought. The ideal of an age just emerging from barbarism will display but little of the softer colouring under which a more advanced civilisation seeks to depict the objects of its reverence or its love.

Of the society, which, in its mystical language, sent forth two doves, to find a home, the one upon a desolate rock off the coasts of Argyle, the other amid the ruins of an abandoned city in the wilds of northern Gaul, we can scarcely hope to trace more than the general outlines. Constant wars and interminable feuds are evidence enough that it was not without its element of ferocity, while the legends and songs in which it has recast the history of its most prominent saints reveal a play of fancy and feeling, an appreciation of form and colour, and a love of all that is beautiful in the outward world, of which we find but few and faint glimpses in Sophokles, or Æschylos, or the great epics of the Homeric age. Of these lays (for so they may be fairly termed, whether their form be poetry or prose), few are more beautiful or more touching than that which sings of the earthly and spiritual exploits of Columbkille. No doubtful tokens must precede the birth of one who should carry the Divine Light from the crowded monasteries of Ireland to the shores of Argyle and Strathcluyd. As the mother of Paris dreamed that from her

Poetry of Scottish tradition.

body there went forth a torch which should destroy the sacred Ilion, so an angel gave a curiously embroidered and glistening veil to the mother of Columba, from whose hand it spread abroad until it covered the plains, the forests, and the mountains. His birthplace was a rock; but that rock became a refuge for all who, like this scion of the great house of O'Neal, should be doomed to the bitter lot of exile. For those who slept on that hard stone, banishment should lose something of its misery, and the memory of their native land should come back to them not with the gnawing agony of home sickness, but with the peaceful glow of a tender and consoling beauty. The story of his childhood is not unlike the exquisite apologue of Prodikos, the difference being only that Columba had made up his mind at a time when Herakles had yet to choose between Kakia and Aretê.

"'I choose Virginity and Wisdom," said Columba, and forthwith three beautiful maidens stood before him. His modesty shrank from the caresses which they were eager to lavish upon him. "Know you not," they asked, "whose love and kisses you are throwing away? We are three sisters, whom our Father has betrothed to thee." "But who is your Father?" "He is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world." "I cannot deny the greatness of your lineage," said Columba,

"but what are your names?" "We are called Virginity, Wisdom, and Prophecy. We shall never leave thee, and ever love thee with a love which can know no change."'

The choice was significant of his whole career. The chaste preacher, the wise seer, had not wedded himself to meekness or to charity. The young chieftain, whose forefathers had ruled the land for generations, who by the splendour of his hereditary fame or of his own virtues drew thousands to fight under his standard against their spiritual enemies, could scarcely afford to espouse brides who might take the sting from his rebukes and arrest his avenging arm as it fell on unjust judges or oppressive kings. The near kinsman of the monarch of Ireland, he need not stoop before princes and lords whose descent was not more noble than his own. Nothing more was wanted to raise him to a supreme authority than the idea that his word carried power; nor was there any dearth of opportunities for his righteous utterances. As he sat in the open air listening to the instructions of a Christian bard, a young girl chased by a robber ran up and sought to hide herself behind the folds of their robes. The marauder pierced her through with his spear and fled. 'How long,' asked the bard, 'will God suffer this iniquity to go unpunished?' 'Not an hour,' was the reply: 'Even now the

The childhood and youth of Columba.

spirit of the maiden ascends to heaven, and the soul of the murderer goes down into hell.' As the words were uttered, the robber fell dead, and the name of Columba became great throughout the land. From all quarters men flocked to learn from him the secrets of the spiritual life. Thirty-seven monasteries depended on his guidance and claimed his care; but his home and his delight were in Derry. The sound of the axe was never heard in its oak woods, and the poor alone might gather the fallen branches and leaves for fuel. The place became consecrated in his songs. On each oak leaf he beheld a white-robed angel seated, and all things in heaven and earth became instinct with gladness. The rapture of the bard broke out into malediction. 'Cursed be the man who shall do hurt to this delicious paradise.'

His love of learning.

An intense faith and devotion inspired Columba, as it inspired all true monks, with a passionate love of transcribing the sacred books in whose language he had learned to think and to speak. Three thousand 'religious' were under his rule; it was not too much that he should make three hundred copies of the Psalter and the Gospels for their benefit and comfort. If such treasures were stored up anywhere, thither he went to see them. An old recluse named Longarad repulsed him, and by way of answer Columba prayed that his books might cease to be

of use to himself or to others. The memory of Longarad might neutralise the curse for himself; but his writing became illegible, and after his death no man living could decipher his manuscripts. In one instance at least his appetite for books led to momentous issues. His old master, the abbot Finnian, had a psalter of which Columba longed to possess a copy. It was necessary to do the work of transcription clandestinely; but the divine light which streamed from his left hand supplied the place of lamp or candle while he wrote with the other. A passer-by, startled by the brilliant rays which issued through the key-hole of the cell-door, stooped his head to learn the cause, and had his eye knocked out by a blow from the beak of a crane which had taken up its dwelling in the sanctuary. The fault of Columba was heightened by the mischance, and the abbot informed his disciple that as a copy made without leave appertained to the owner of the original, he must resign the 'Son-book.' Columba refused, and the appeal was carried to King Dermot at Tara, who in spite of his near kinship with the saint gave judgment that the young calf belonged to the cow, and the young book to the old one. Columba pronounced the sentence unjust, and threatened to take vengeance. He had not sat at the feet of St. Basil and learnt like the monk Zosimus to say that if the getting of books is to

begin in quarreling, it is better to have none at all. At this juncture a young son of the chief of Connaught, who had taken refuge with Columba, was torn away from the sanctuary and put to death by order of the lord of Ireland. The wrath of Columba was now fully roused. 'I shall tell my brethren and my kinsfolk,' he said, 'how the rights of the Church have been violated in my person, and the wrong shall be wiped out in blood. My humiliation shall be followed by yours in the day of battle.' As he journeyed from Tara, his thoughts shaped themselves into a psalm which more nearly resembles a chorus of Sophokles than the Sermon on the Mount:—

'Alone on the mountains, I need the help of God only. This shall shield me better than a guard of six thousand warriors, for not even these could avail me aught, if the hour appointed for my death be come. The reprobate perish even within the sanctuary; the elect of God is preserved in the fore-front of the battle. Let God order my life as it may please him; nothing can be taken from it or added to it. Each man must fulfil his own lot. Cursed, then, be he who does evil. The thing which he sees not comes upon him, and the thing which he sees vanishes from his grasp. It is not a sign or an omen which can fix the period of our life. Our trust is in One who is mightier. I care not for the voices of birds or the

casting of lots; my Druid is Christ, the Son of God. My kingdom is that of the King of kings, and I dwell with my brethren at Kells and at Moone.'

The battle of Cul-Dreimhne was the issue of his crusade. As the armies fought, Columba, who was fasting, prayed with all his strength for the discomfiture of his enemies, and Dermot, utterly routed, fled to Tara. The psalter which had led to the strife became a talisman, and enshrined in a rich case was carried about in all the wars of the clan of O'Donnell. The victory had been won by the prayers of Columba; but a synod convened at Teilte cared little for the inference that a victory so gained must have been achieved with the good pleasure of God, and passed upon him a sentence of excommunication. Not a whit dismayed, Columba turned the scales in many an after fight by the power of his intercessions. At length he found an advocate. St. Brandan had seen the column of fire which went before Columba and the angels who walked by his side, and he besought his brethren at Teilte to revoke the sentence passed on one thus manifestly singled out for some high purpose. But Columba himself was now disquieted in conscience. He had begun to doubt, not that his victories had been won by his prayers, but whether he had been right in applying so potent an engine to the discomfiture of mortal adversaries. His first anxiety was for

Columba as a warrior.

those who had fallen in the wars which he had provoked, and he took the readiest way to relieve himself of it. 'I beseech you,' he said to a holy monk named Abban, 'to pray for the men who have been slain in the wars waged by me for the honour of the Church. I know that if you intercede they will obtain mercy, and the angel with whom you daily converse will reveal to you the will of God concerning them.' The monk, prompted by a feeling of modesty, long refused his request. At length he prayed, and when his prayer was ended, the angel gave him the assurance that all should be admitted to the bliss of heaven.

His own future course Columba learnt from the saintly Molaise, who charged him forthwith to leave Ireland and to see it again no more. The souls whom he should bring under the yoke of Christ he must find in another land. This doom he announced to his brethren, twelve of whom resolved to go with him, well knowing that they should see their homes again no more. Columba himself went forth to an everlasting banishment in an agony of love for the land of his birth. In a frail boat he reached the shores of Oronsay; but from thence his eyes could still discern the blue hills of Ireland dimly in the distance. Again he faced the stormy sea, and landing on the island consecrated by his name found

Columba in exile.

that from no part of it could even the outline of the Irish coast be seen. He had much to do to prepare his abode on the then wooded sides of Iona;[1] but his passionate grief vented itself in songs full of tender memories and irrepressible yearnings. Sometimes he is wandering again through the woods of Derry, listening to the song of the thrush or the cuckoo, or the sigh of the wind among the oak-branches. Sometimes he is guiding his skiff among the bays and inlets, while his ear is soothed by the sound of the waves as they break on the rocky shores. The very thought of Ireland is full of sweetness, and all that it contains is dear to him except the chiefs who bear rule in it. The old resentment is strong within him; but stronger still is the longing to return to that land in which death itself would be better than an endless life in Albion.

[1] The architectural history of Iona begins with a much later age. The wattled huts raised by Columba had either crumbled away, or been removed long before the erection of the church, the history of which has been given by the Messrs. Buckler in their memoir on the Cathedral of Iona. The preface to this work, by the Bishop of Argyll, is rather a summary of conclusions than an attempt to demonstrate their truth. Dr. Ewing asserts the absolute independence of the Scottish Church from that of Rome; but although we may have no wish to call the statement into question, we may yet feel some misgivings in following a guide who is content to assure us that the writings attributed to Columba are all of more or less authenticity. (P. 19.) So are those of Phalaris and Ossian, of Hesiod and Homer; but we learn nothing from a phrase which really has no meaning.

Columba had now begun the great work of his life; but in the battle with heathenism and in the government of his community there was full scope still for all his natural qualities. He was still the genial friend, the stern teacher, the inexorable judge, the prophet whose word was doom. One of his disciples, named Finchan, had admitted to the priesthood[1] Aedh the black, the murderer of King Dermot; but the remembrance of old wrongs could not tempt Columba to palliate the act of his friend. 'The hand of Finchan,' he said, 'shall rot away and be buried before the body to which it belongs, and the murderer shall fall by the blow of an assassin.' 'Cette double prophétie s'accomplit.' M. de Montalembert is right; the prediction accomplished itself.[2] To a fugitive from Ireland who besought Columba to impose on him a penance for his sins, the reply was, that he must discipline himself for seven years on a lonely island near Iona. 'But how then,' asked the stranger, 'can I atone for a perjury which I have not yet confessed? One of my kinsfolk paid my ransom when I was doomed to die as a homicide, and I promised to be henceforth his slave; but in a little while I repented of my vow, and now I am here.' The additional

Columba at Iona.

[1] This ordination is a subject of controversy. Finchan was a priest.

[2] Vol. iii. p. 164.

penalty was exclusion from the Paschal communion during the seven years. When these were ended, Columba sent him back to Ireland with an ivory-hilted sword as his ransom; but his generous kinsman refused to receive it, and taking off his girdle released him from his bond. On his return to Iona, Columba, greeting him as Libranius, the freeman, dismayed him by the injunction to go and spend the remainder of his days on the rugged island where he had done his seven years' penance. To his tears and prayers Columba replied gently: 'Your life will be spent away from me; but with me and my monks you shall die, with us you will rise again, and with us you shall have a place in heaven.' More commonly his prophecies were of evils which we may probably insure by predicting them. Among the penitents to whose scanty meal he had ordered some slight additions, there was one who, like Lupicinus at Condat, protested against the relaxation. ' 'You refuse the refreshment which I offer to you,' was the answer; 'but you will soon become again a robber as you were, and steal venison in the forests which surround your home.' To such as welcomed him under their roofs he promised length of days and abundant prosperity, while for such as would not shelter him there remained a life of wretchedness and beggary. No great effort is needed to understand the powers

with which such vaticinations would invest him in a faithful or credulous age. But among his many utterances prophecies were not wanting which appealed to the popular sense of justice and equity. Columba had intrusted an exile from Pictland to the care of a chief who, breaking his pledge, put him to death. The swine of this chief were then fattening in the woods; but Columba's word had gone forth that he should never taste their flesh. Eager to falsify the prediction, the chief ordered one to be placed over the fire and hastened to taste the meat before it was well roasted. The morsel had not touched his lips when he fell dead; and the bystanders confessed that a life of iniquity was thus well rewarded. Another miscreant, who sought the Saint's life, smote a disciple who had purposely put on Columba's cowl. A year had passed away, when Columba said suddenly, 'Twelve months ago Lamm-Dess thought to slay me; at this moment he himself is slain.' And so it was that in that hour he fell by the blow of an assassin who invoked Columba's name. There was magic power in the mere sound, as there was in everything that had touched his body or received his blessing. The cowl which had saved his disciple from the murderer's knife becomes an impenetrable breastplate to those who wear it in battle, but the chief who forgets to bind it on him is smitten by

the sword of his enemies.[1] The mere recital of hymns in his honour insured safety. It was, however, impossible for the wicked to recite them perfectly. A profligate clerk of Armagh, who wished to attain salvation without a change of life, had succeeded in learning one half of the talismanic Ambhra,[2] but toiled hopelessly at the rest. In a paroxysm of vexation he betook himself to the tomb of the Saint, and spent the night in tears, prayers, and fasting. In the morning he was able to recite the latter half; but the earlier portion had faded from his memory like mist from a hill side. For ages the name of Columba remained a terror to oppressors and evildoers. In recompense for his misdeeds, Richard Strongbow died of an ulcer inflicted by the Saint whose churches he had despoiled. His vengeance in like manner overtook Hugh de Lacy who perished at Derry; and the Columba who smote murderers became Saint Quhalm (Qualm), the dread arbiter of sudden death.[3]

But if Columba achieved triumphs not unlike those of his rival Benedict, he was also not without his temptations. A King of Dalriada, placing his daughter before him, asked the Saint if her beauty excited in him no emotion. 'Doubtless it does,' was the reply; 'but

Temptations of Columba.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 218.
[2] Vol. iii. p. 208.
[3] Vol. iii. p. 294.

not for all the world would I yield to a natural weakness.' A greater peril lay in the unscrupulous love of a woman who dwelt not far from Iona, and who resolved to conquer the strong man in his strength. Made aware of her design, Columba sent her a letter warning her of judgment and recompense to come, and the woman who had sought to entangle him in a fleshly affection learnt to love him as a sister and became a saint herself.

Mighty in his predictions and in his prayers, he was not less powerful in his miracles, whether of beneficence or of revenge. Hindrances which barred the way to other men were to him as nothing. Coming as a Christian missionary to the court of the heathen king Bruidh,[1] he was charged not to enter his gates. At the touch of the Saint the bolts gave way, and the great doors opened to receive him in triumph. The marvel produced its fruit in the confirmation granted to Columba of his possessions in Iona. The contest was not always so easy. Broichan the Druid had received warning of his coming death if he refused to surrender a maiden whom he had seized. His obstinacy was subdued in the hour of mortal agony, and a draught of water into which a pebble sent by Columba had been dipped

Miracles of Columba.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 181.

restored his strength. With his strength returned his hatred of the Saint, and he resolved to confront marvels with marvels. In his turn he warned Columba that on the day of his departure he should find the heavens black with clouds and the winds contrary. Nothing daunted, Columba bade his men hoist the sail against the wind; and the canvas swelled in the teeth of the gale, as though the boat were running before a fair breeze. If again things inanimate obeyed his word, things unseen were not hidden from his eyes. If a friendly chief was hard pressed in battle many leagues away, the Saint knew at what moment he should summon the brethren to prayer, and when he should announce that their prayers had turned the fortune of the fight. So, as he was writing in his cell, he was heard to call suddenly for help. The cry was addressed to his guardian angel, who at his bidding went to succour a man who had fallen from a round tower then being built at Derry. In the frosts of winter Columba saw the monks of a distant monastery fainting with cold as with frozen fingers they handled the stones and mortar for a new tower. The compassion expressed by Columba made itself felt by the abbot of the toilworn monks, and the genial glow which filled his breast prompted him to release them from their labour until the weather should again be fair. Well might his disciples say that saints

immeasurably more holy than their brethen could not be compared with Columbkille.

Ready to share the toils of his monks on land, he was reverenced specially as their guardian and deliverer at sea. At his word noisome beasts fell dead;[1] at his supplication the stormy winds went down. But potent as were his prayers, there were times when he could pray no more for very weariness. 'It is not my turn to day,' he said on one such occasion; 'the holy abbot Kenneth must now pray for us.' Kenneth was far away in his monastery, about to join his monks at their humble meal. On hearing the appeal of Columba, he said that it was no time for eating when his friend was in danger of perishing at sea, and hastening to the church there obtained his safety by his prayers. Nay, the mere fact that a man was the friend of Columba gave him some share of his power. When the fugitive Libranius wished to return from Ireland to Iona, he was refused a passage in a ship about to sail for the coast of Argyle. He invoked at once the aid of his friend. Straightway the wind changed and the vessel was driven back to land. Guessing the cause, the sailors asked Libranius if, on condition that they took him in, he would promise to procure them a favourable breeze. Libranius promised, and the

Intercessary power of Columba.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 239.

aid of Columba was not wanting for the redemption of his word. The familiar love felt for him during his lifetime was not wholly absorbed in reverence after his death. Spaniards threaten their saints with the scourge if they fail to comply with the requests addressed to them; and the monks of Iona expostulate with Columba for the contrariness of the wind. 'Why is this?' they asked; 'we had thought that you were in great favour with God.'[1] Others who were detained in Lorn on the very eve of his festival, complained that he might with ease have obtained for them the privilege of celebrating mass on his feast day in the church. Their remonstrances were successful, and the wind veered to the necessary quarter.

Columba as the healer of sickness.

Nor was his beneficence bounded to good services rendered at sea. Trees which had yielded only bitter fruits were sweetened by his benediction, and barley sown in June was by his intercession ready for the harvest in August. On the sight of a dark cloud which he knew to be laden with epidemic disease, he sent a monk to distribute among the sick some bread which he had blessed, and the malady passed away. If the light streaming from his left hand had enabled him to transcribe a psalter at night, his sanctity was made perceptible to another

[1] Vol. iii. p. 244.

physical sense. Towards the close of their master's life, his friend and successor Baithen asked his brethren as they approached the monastery whether they were conscious of any special feeling as they stood on that spot. An exquisite perfume, as if all the flowers of the world were there brought together, filled them, they said, with delight, and a joy so great stirred their hearts that they felt neither weariness nor pain. 'It is the breath of our master,' said Baithen; 'Columba, in his ceaseless love and care for us, is sending his breath to refresh and comfort us.'

Close of his missionary life.

In one point only his prescience was at fault. His days were not to be wholly spent in exile, and many expeditions to Ireland broke the monotony of his later years. There were momentous political missions to be discharged, and the religious houses which he had governed in his youth laid upon him, as they grew and ramified, a more complicated responsibility in his old age. As his long career drew towards its close, his visions brought him more and more the presage of happy deaths for those who had shared his toils, and whose lot it was to enter on the fruition of Paradise before their master. With himself the conflict was sterner and the race more anxious, as he approached the goal. His body, macerated by habitual fasts, was plunged each night into freezing water while he went through

the whole Psalter; and the poverty of a woman who complained that she had nothing but wild herbs and nettles for her sustenance prompted him to refuse henceforth any more generous food, and sharply to rebuke a friend who ventured to mingle a little butter with this sorry meal. His asceticism was visibly rewarded. Day by day his form became more luminous, his raiment more glistering. Day by day, when he had withdrawn to the most hidden nooks, the brethren, whom he had straitly charged not to follow him, found him in rapt converse with heavenly visitants clad in robes of dazzling splendour. The radiance streamed from the windows of his cell, as the yearnings of his soul found vent in songs more entrancing than any which his brethren had yet heard from him. His eyes were opened to see clearly the inner sense of passages in the Scriptures which thus far had been to him dark sayings. Monks who hid themselves in the church to watch him at his devotions were betrayed by the burst of light which filled every corner of the building; and novices who wished to know whether the same glory surrounded him as he reposed in the night were blinded by an overpowering blaze as they pried curiously through the keyhole. For several years the holy house of Iona was gladdened with this visible realisation of the bliss of heaven; and the only care which ruffled the happiness of the

Saint lay in the power which the prayers of the monks had to counteract his own. If at any time the ecstatic beauty of his countenance was clouded by an expression of deep sorrow, it was because he saw the march of the angels, who were descending from heaven to bear away his soul, arrested by the vehement intercessions of the brethren. Four years were thus added to the sum of his life on earth, and not until these were ended could he prepare for his departure. He had besought for himself the privilege of yielding up his soul on the day of the great Easter festival; but his charity forbade him to mar the gladness of that supreme feast, and he consented to tarry with them till the Sabbath of the Octave. On the morning of Saturday he made ready with serene joy for the last journey.

The story of his death.

There is something inexpressibly touching in the perfect quietness which marks the closing scene. The Sabbath of his long and toilsome life was at length come, and the natural pain of parting with his brethren was tempered by the thought that the separation was but for a little while. He had a blessing for all, for the grain stored up in the garner, for the old white horse which placed its head on its master's lap as he sat down under the great cross for the last time. Departing thence, he made his way slowly to the summit of the little hill whence

his eye could range over the whole island, and there pronounced his benediction on his children and on all that they had, and foretold the greatness and the glories of Iona in the time to come. Returning to his cell, he took up his habitual work of transcription. His fingers moved over the parchment until they had written the words, 'They who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.' 'Here I must stop,' he said: 'Baithen will write the rest.' This faithful friend, who was to succeed him as abbot, supported him into the church to assist at the vigil of the Octave, and remained with him afterwards in his cell. Through him he sent his last words to his dear children. They expressed a simple trust that a deep peace and a fervent charity might for ever reign among them. After this message the voice of Columba was heard no more: but when the midnight bell gave the signal for matins, the Saint arose, and hastening more rapidly than the brethren could follow him, entered the choir and prostrated himself before the altar. The building had not yet been lighted, and the monk who was nearest knew not in the darkness where he was. When others came with lights, they found him lying before the altar steps. Dermid, the monk who had groped his way to his master, was supporting his head on his knees. Opening his eyes, the Saint bestowed on all a glance full of a serene and

radiant gladness, and, aided by Dermid, raised his hand for the act of benediction. Presently the muscles relaxed, and a faint sigh marked the moment when he fell asleep.

Such is the legend of Columbkille, as recounted by M. de Montalembert. The genius of the race to which he belonged may have thrown the story of his life into a form more than usually attractive; but its main incidents and its more striking features are scattered plentifully over the vast field of Christian hagiology. If we read it as a poem, we cannot well deny its charm. If we sift it as a history, the residuum will at best be but scanty. But whatever it be, we must reach it by a process which can lay some claim to be called a method, not by a balancing or a selection of probabilities, any one or all of which may belong to the region of plausible fiction; and it is here that M. de Montalembert fails us. If in a series of astonishing sequences some are to be rejected as wildly impossible, others because the narrative comes to us at second or third hand, others because the extraordinary incidents related may be traced to their source in metaphor, it becomes the first duty of the historian to determine whether a career thus abounding in prodigies and marvels belongs after all to an order of things differing in any way from that in which we are conscious of living ourselves. We have obviously no more right to pick and choose be-

Historical residuum in the story of Columba.

tween stories in which the machinery is mainly supernatural, than to select any particular date out of many, when we have valid evidence for none. When, during the lifetime of a saint, and for generations after it, the annals of the country exhibit a momentous series of frightful crimes, of bloody wars, of ravages marked by the worst conceivable cruelties, the historian cannot shake off the responsibility of determining whether a picture of angelic purity and peace, surrounded by such horrible accompaniments, can be anything but a poem in which the men of a later age have embodied their ideal of saintliness. If, instead of attempting this or of admitting candidly that we have and can have no definite knowledge of the subject, he takes a number of incidents all essentially the same in kind, and betrays a disbelief of some, while he relates the rest in terms applicable to the best ascertained facts of ancient or modern history, we may admire his generous sentiment, his impartial estimate of moral or spiritual character, his charm of style, but we cannot receive him as a safe guide through a field which it is better to avoid altogether than to traverse blindfold.

Historical criticism of M. de Montalembert.

From many of the incidents thus related, to all appearance, as actual fact, M. de Montalembert himself strips off all historical character. If some of the most striking instances, whether of prophecies fulfilled or of prayer immediately answered, are to be explained

by referring them to an exceptional knowledge of physical phenomena, then it is the writer himself who casts suspicion on all narratives relating to the accomplishment of predictions or the mechanical action of prayer. Still more, if the legends which have gathered round the name of a saint are precisely those which grow up among a people as passionate in their love and hatred as they are destitute of the historical sense, and if these stories floated down the stream of oral tradition for many a year before any attempt was made to draw up a regular biography, then all efforts to reconstruct the history may for all that we know land us in the quagmires of ingenious conjecture. How then does M. de Montalembert deal with his materials? The alleged affection of Columba for the oak woods of Derry is taken as evidence that he composed the songs which celebrate their beauty; and these poems 'reveal him to us in one of the most attractive aspects as a singer of that national poetry, on whose intimate union with the Catholic faith and invincible power over a generous people we cannot lay too great a stress.'[1] The assertion that Columba as a singer stands at the head of two hundred poets, 'whose memory and names in default of their works have remained dear to Ireland,' is made seemingly without any misgiving that in this sense Columba may be as mythical as

[1] Vol. iii. p. 120.

the goodly company of bards who have left nothing but a name behind them. Yet M. de Montalembert has himself admitted[1] that the text of these songs belongs perhaps to a later age than that of Columba. The plea that they nevertheless illustrate sufficiently the sentiments of the Saint and his disciples, can but show that men who ascribe a poem to any given author will naturally do their best to make the poem speak as that author would have spoken. Nay more, the ambhra or so-called bardic hymn in honour of Columba is regarded as furnishing adequate proof of the fact that the Saint saved the whole order of bards from indiscriminate massacre,[2] and that these bards were the representatives of the Druidical hierarchy. But under the wand of Mr. Burton the Druids have vanished into thin air, and the supposed defence of the bards by Columba can prove nothing beyond the fact that they were held in high estimation, and that they may have suffered some wrong.

Of the marvellous narratives with which even the pages of Adamnan are crowded, M. de Montalembert speaks with the same uncertain language. They are not all unhistorical, yet it may be necessary to put them all aside if we wish to look on Columba as he really was. The narrative of Adamnan.

'Whatever allowances may be made for ex-

[1] Vol. iii. p. 117. [2] Vol. iii. p. 204.

aggerations and fables with which the proverbial credulity of the Celtic tribes has overlaid the legends of their saints, no Christian will be tempted to reject the well-attested narratives which bear witness to the supernatural appearances lavished on Columba, as to many other saints, throughout his life, and especially in his old age. These heroic champions of Christian truth and virtue assuredly needed such prodigies to strengthen them under the toils and trials of their anxious mission. From time to time it was necessary that they should rise to these heavenly regions, thence to draw strength for the conflict amidst constantly recurring hindrances, dangers, and temptations, and there also to learn how best to withstand the hatred, the savage habits, and the blind feuds of the tribes whom they sought to set free.' [1]

Yet in spite of the historical character thus claimed for some of these incidents, another process may be required if we wish to reach the true historical residuum.

'It has been no easy task to select the features on which we may fix a somewhat exclusive attention, and to sift out all that may attract the modern reader (in other words, all that relates to the character of the Saint and his influence on the history of his time) from the mass of legends

[1] Vol. iii. p. 270.

which are wholly taken up with minute details of supernatural manifestations and ascetic discipline. But when we have done this, we have before us, with features sufficiently marked and in outlines sufficiently clear, the grand old man with his chastened and genial habits, his sweet yet powerful voice, his Irish tonsure, with the crown of his head shaved and his locks hanging down behind, clad in his monastic garb, as he sits on the prow of his boat made of skins laid on osiers, sailing through the stormy archipelago and among the narrow lakes of the north of Scotland, and carrying from island to island and from clan to clan light, truth, and justice, the life of the soul and of conscience.'[1]

Few words are needed in reply to these plausible conclusions. The whole narrative displays a chain of causation scarcely less extraordinary and astounding than that of the tale of Troy or the Mahâbhârata. Columba knows what things are being done in distant regions; his word accomplishes itself; his prayers can still the waves of the sea and the winds of heaven. His body gleams with unearthly light, and angelic visitants are seen to talk with and to strengthen him. These marvels form in great part the strands of which the rope is made up, and for none have we even the

Supernatural machinery of these traditions.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 282.

pretence of strictly contemporary testimony. But even if we had, the value of the method which would arrive at historical truth by leaving out all that is extraordinary in the narrative may be measured by the ingenuity with which Herodotos converts the myths of Iô, Eurôpê, and Helen into a story not much more poetical than De Foe's account of the apparition of Mrs. Veale to her friend at Canterbury. Of all such conclusions we can but say again and again, in the words of Mr. Grote,[1] that as the possibility of them cannot be denied, so neither can their reality be affirmed.

Columbanus a sea-god.

But M. de Montalembert himself, not content with rejecting some of these narratives as belonging to the cloudland of mythology, hazards an explanation of their origin.

'Under this legendary dress we may easily discern in the monastic apostle of Caledonia (over and above the marvellous power of his intercessions) an attentive study of the winds and all other natural phenomena affecting the insular and maritime life of the tribes whom he wished to train in the Christian faith. A hundred stories exhibit him to us as the Æolus of these mythical times and these dangerous seas. Every hour men came to beg from him a favourable breeze for any expedition which they might be taking in hand. Nay, it fell out once that two of his monks,

[1] *History of Greece*, part I. ch. xv.

before setting sail in two different directions, entreated him at the same time for a breeze from the north and a breeze from the south. The prayers of both were granted, by detaining the monk who wished to go to Ireland until the other, who was sailing only to a neighbouring islet, should have had time to finish his voyage.'[1]

We have here a virtual admission that for some of the most striking incidents in the life of Columba we are indebted simply to a significant metaphor. How then are we to distinguish those which can be so explained from others which may be really historical? If, again, such marvels were needed, as M. de Montalembert affirms, to sustain the saints in their struggles with heathenism and the cruelty of savage life, on what grounds are we justified in explaining away any such narratives by naturalistic interpretations? Columba and Wilfrid alike heal the sick and raise the dead, and from the bodies of both streams a celestial splendour. We may, if we please, accept the legend in spite of its inconsistencies; but we are bound to reject it at once, if our criticism leads us to mutilate its prominent features. Our faith in the story is gone if we ask why the effulgence from Columba's person which dazzled the novice at his cell door should fail to lighten the church

Myths arising from metaphor.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 242.

on the evening of his death; or why Wilfrid of York should complain of being thrust into a dungeon where he was deprived of lamp or candle, when his jailers were dazzled by the brilliant light which filled his prison?[1] Yet more, if incidents not belonging to the ordinary course of human life are needed either for those who do battle with heathenism or for those who are rescued from it, how are the narratives of such incidents to maintain their credit if the cause fails to produce its designed effect, and if the cause itself is on either side ignored? Wilfrid restores to life the son of a widow. But even this mighty work has not the slightest weight with his ecclesiastical adversaries; and Wilfrid himself in his conference with Colman sets aside the miracles of Columba as being possibly diabolical, and as being in any case irrelevant to the subject of the Easter controversy. Of the miracles attributed to Augustine of Canterbury the most important was performed for the purpose of convincing the British bishops that they were bound to submit to his legatine authority. It is true, indeed, that Gregory warns his friend against being puffed up by any manifestation of preternatural power in his own person; but it is perplexing that neither Augustine nor the British bishops should regard the controversy as brought any nearer to its

[1] Vol. iv. pp. 282-284.

settlement by an action performed with the sole object of putting an end to it. The instance is crucial. If the work of Augustine in any way depended upon or was furthered by the miracle, the like need and the like benefit may be pleaded for the acceptance of similar narratives in the biographies of Wilfrid or Columba. If the absence of any result affect the credibility of the story in one case, it must affect that of all similar narratives. The cure of the blind man by Augustine is related by M. de Montalembert simply as fact, and without any remark on its harmony or disagreement with the rest of the narrative;[1] Dean Hook has dealt with it as summarily as Sir G. C. Lewis has treated the story of the Tarquins or the Decemvirs.

'In justice to the memory of Augustine, I venture to say that I do not believe that any such transaction took place. That Bede related faithfully the tradition of the Church of Canterbury, no one doubts; but the event recorded took place some time between the years 600 and 605. Bede, we know, finished his history in 731. More than a century, therefore, elapsed between the alleged event and the first written record of it. If we read his narrative attentively, the account of the miracle looks like an interpolation. The whole action terminates with the determination of

[1] Vol. iii. p. 403.

the British bishops, the anger of Augustine, his *increpationes*, when suddenly, without any reason assigned, Augustine becomes collected and calm. He deliberately, according to a plan prearranged, works his miracle; and what is the effect produced? Bede does indeed say that the Britons confessed that it was the true way of righteousness which Augustine taught; but the statement is contradicted by the fact that he does not name a single Briton who became a convert to Augustine's opinion. No Briton invited his countrymen to change the customs of their country on the ground of the miracle. All that we know is, that a second conference was decided upon, and was held. At that conference the Britons one and all determined to adhere to their own traditions. Is it not strange, if the miracle had been wrought, that by neither party any allusion should have been made to it? Surely, if a miracle had been wrought, Augustine would have been eloquent on an argument so powerful, and the British Christians, if the miracle was admitted, would have had nothing to plead for what would in that case have been mere perverseness and obstinacy.'[1]

The poetry of Christian hagiology.

Dean Hook is perhaps hypercritical. The British bishops, if they had seen the letters of Gregory or were aware of their tenour, might have pleaded that the Pope himself left them the alternative of rejecting any

[1] *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. i. ch. ii.

miracle as wrought by the power of the devil; but additional weight is thus added to the argument that for the settlement of such questions extraordinary incidents are both unnecessary and useless, and assuredly the work of Columba or Wilfrid was not harder or more urgent than that of Augustine. With the rejection of such incidents in the life of this great missionary the portentous mass of similar legends which gather round his contemporaries or his successors crumbles away. The marvellous agency which supersedes at the will of a saint the ordinary sequence of human affairs fades into the mists of poetry; and we at once accuse ourselves of an over harsh judgment if we assume that the religion of the age was as talismanic as it is said to have been. The stone at Gartan, the ambhra hymn which sang the praises of Columba, the cowl which rivals the armour of Achilleus or of Sigurd, may all be classed with the spells which evoke the marvels of the Arabian Nights' fiction; and, like these marvels, they are the offspring of a sentiment which knows nothing and cares nothing for the orderly government of nature. If the Abbess Elfleda really felt assured that the touch of anything which had belonged to her friend St. Cuthbert would at once heal her sickness,[1] she was under the influence of a superstition worthy of a Hindoo devotee. The story

[1] Vol. iii. p. 425.

that her recovery was effected by a linen girdle which St. Cuthbert sent her, was but the form into which the poetry of the time threw the fact that meek and merciful men are the true sons of consolation.

Comparison of legends.

To such as may find pleasure in watching the varied play of these natural feelings, it may be a task of some interest and perhaps of some profit to trace the recurrence of the same myth in the lives of a multitude of saintly heroes. The historian may feel a satisfaction of another kind in marking the significant diminution or disappearance of marvellous incidents as the narrative acquires a better title to be regarded as the evidence of contemporaries.[1] He may also feel that the story of the death of Bede, identical as it is in many of its features with that of Columba, is really more beautiful and touching. The visible angels and the bodily effulgence are not there; but his lips still dictate, as the hand of Columba writes, the words of eternal life. 'It is finished,' said the scribe as Bede ended the dictation of St. John's Gospel. 'You say true,' replied the dying saint, 'it is finished, and now take my head in your hands and turn my face towards the sanctuary.'

[1] M. de Montalembert, with his usual candour, admits that Bede disclaims all personal knowledge of any of the extraordinary incidents related by him. (Vol. v. p. 67.)

Pictures such as these may both console and edify; but if the narratives in which they are found are histories, then they must be submitted to the tests which distinguish fact from fiction or falsehood. There is no satisfaction in the permission which M. de Montalembert gives to his readers to receive or reject the miracles attributed to St. Wilfrid,[1] while he insists that some of the marvels in the life of Columba are historical facts; and the method which accepts likelihoods as certainties, and regards as 'authentic' those portions of a narrative which do not exhibit a supernatural machinery, must be set aside as simply fallacious. Still more must the dispassionate critic set his face against attempts to analyse the early history of Christianity in Britain or in other countries from the point of view taken by the ecclesiastical historians of an age in which the hierarchical constitution of the Church had been fully developed. As we read the glowing pages of M. de Montalembert, the severe condemnation passed on all offenders against monastic and Christian morality, the candid admission that all was not rose-colour in the religious houses of the sixth and seventh centuries may almost cause us to forget that there may be momentous questions lying quite apart from the defiant profligacy of

Falsification of history by monastic writers.

[1] Vol. iv. p. 231.

English kings and the scandalous pilgrimages of English nuns. It may be true, as M. de Montalembert asserts, that the controversy which was practically ended by the defeat of Colman at the Council of Whitby may have been caused simply by the adherence of the Scottish Christians to a calculation by which the time of the Easter festival had once been generally determined; and yet the question wh ther their obstinate retention of an obsolete rule may not point to some radical difference of principle may be no nearer to its answer. Of this important subject M. de Montalembert's treatment is, to say the least, evasive:—

'An honest and careful examination of all monastic peculiarities to be found in the life of Columba reveals nothing in the way either of observances or of duties which runs counter to the rules adopted by all the religious communities of the sixth century from the traditions of the fathers of the desert. But what we see clearly is—first, the necessity of the vow or solemn profession to mark the definite admission of the postulant into the society after a trial of whatever duration; and, secondly, the absolute conformity of the religious life followed by Columba and his monks with the precepts and rites of the Catholic Church in all ages. Texts indisputable and undisputed prove the existence of auricular confession, of the invocation of saints, the universal

trust in their protection and in their interference with the conduct of temporal affairs, the celebration of the mass, the Real Presence in the Eucharist, the celibacy of clerks, fasting and abstinence, prayer for the dead, the sign of the cross, and more particularly a diligent and profound study of the Scriptures. So fall the fancies of writers who think that in the Celtic Church they discern a primitive Christianity beyond the pale of Catholicism; so once more is the lie given to the absurd but inveterate prejudice which accuses our fathers of having ignored or forbidden the study of the Bible.' [1]

It is obvious that a close agreement both in doctrine and practice may have coexisted with the most complete independence of the several Christian societies, and that so long as we infer the absolute authority of one Church from the mere fact of such agreement, we are not even on the right road towards solving the mystery. To treat the question as turning on an insignificant point of detail [2] is in truth but little to the purpose. For whatever reason, the Easter controversy interposed a great gulf between the Irish and the Latin Christians; for whatever reason, Wilfrid, the victor in this dispute, the eager Latin partisan, was involved in a lifelong struggle with

[1] Vol. iii. p. 301. [2] Vol. iv. p. 161.

a hierarchy headed by another special champion of the Latin Church.

The singularly inconsistent explanations of this great quarrel given by modern historians may fairly strengthen the conviction that the process of judging from inadequate materials is neither satisfactory nor profitable. According to M. de Montalembert,[1] the diocese of Wilfrid embraced the Picts of Lothian, the Britons of Cumberland, and the mixed clans of Galloway. These Wilfrid, he thinks, would seek to wean from their old traditions, and thus become the object of a suspicion and dislike which afterwards overwhelmed him. The view is plausible, until we remember that Wilfrid's crusade against Celtic ecclesiastical usages would insure the favour of Archbishop Theodore rather than his enmity. In the opinion of Lappenberg,[2] the division of the diocese of York was prompted by fears grounded on the unparalleled magnificence of Wilfrid as a prelate, while Wilfrid in his turn would naturally resist every measure likely to lessen his influence. But this view puts out of sight the fact that the one absorbing passion of Wilfrid's life was devotion to the Roman Church and to the Pope, and that Gregory had expressed to Augustine his desire that the

The controversies between the Scottish and Latin Churches

[1] Vol. iv. p. 226.

[2] *England under the Anglo-Saxon Kings*, vol. i. p. 186

province of York should embrace twelve sees. Hence when Dr. Hook[1] explains the quarrel by the unwillingness of Wilfrid to relinquish the power which he possessed, we have to account for the singular circumstance that Wilfrid should run counter to the one authority whose slightest wish he professed to be ready at all hazards to carry out. When again Dr. Hook lays stress on the disregard with which Theodore treated the papal decree obtained by Wilfrid after his deposition, he forgets seemingly that the Archbishop had complied with the papal decrees which enjoined the reinstatement of Wilfrid in the see filled by Chad, and that submission to one papal decree as such involved the duty of submission to all. Dean Milman alone candidly confesses that the causes of the great quarrel between Wilfrid and Theodore are lost in obscurity.[2] Yet when he tells us that Theodore brought with him to England the Roman love of order and organisation, we must not forget that thus far he was but seeking to realise the deepest yearnings of Wilfrid himself. When he adds that Theodore seems to have formed a great scheme for the submission of the whole island to his metropolitan jurisdiction, we are driven to reply that the scheme was present both in its outline and in its details to the minds

[1] *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. i. ch. iv.

[2] *History of Latin Christianity*, book iv. ch. iv.

of Gregory and Augustine, and that on this supposition Wilfrid should have been his fellow-labourer, not his enemy. Whatever may have been its nature, the quarrel was undoubtedly a serious one. It becomes absurd only in the pages of Mr. Faber.[1] True faith, it would seem, makes it necessary that the reader should forget in each page what the writer has said in the preceding, and according to Mr. Faber's devotional history there was absolutely no ground for the quarrel at all. Both were 'ardent Romanisers,' both were equally saints, and they unfortunately misunderstood each other. As Romanisers, they were both eager to carry out the wishes of Gregory. Still Theodore urged on 'his favourite scheme with hardly justifiable zeal,' and he had 'some reason' for thinking that Wilfrid would object to the division of his diocese. This objection, it seems, owed its origin to a 'singular faculty given like a new sense to honest and hard-working priests.' 'It is the love of souls; and perhaps none but a saint could adequately measure the affliction which a teacher would suffer in having his spiritual children taken from his guidance and paternal care. The converts and their dependent villages all up the valleys of those wooded streams of the romantic north — they were Wilfrid's creation. There he went preaching and confirming and re-

[1] *Lives of the English Saints.* Wilfrid, Bishop of York.

ceiving confessions till he loved his spiritual sons and daughters as not one mother in Bethlehem loved her helpless innocents.' Historians like Lappenberg may be inconsistent; but writers like Mr. Faber have a melancholy pre-eminence amongst the large crowd of fanatics who deliberately debase the powers of their mind by a credulity which we are half tempted to ascribe rather to policy than to conviction.

From this cloying romance the reader may well turn with a feeling of positive refreshment to the pages in which Mr. Burton has analysed the history of Columba. Although nothing is gained 'by carping at the ecclesiastical system of the middle ages,' too great stress can scarcely be laid on his protest, that, if we would fairly give the history of still earlier Christianity, we cannot allow the assumption made by every writer brought up under that school that 'all the complex articulation of the system of which he found himself a part in the thirteenth or fourteenth century had existed from the beginning.' Relations of Columba with the Latin Church.

'The untrammelled student,' he adds, 'knows that it is the creation of time and design.'[1] It follows that 'one cannot trust the ecclesiastical historians as correctly rendering events removed to any distance back from their own age. They

[1] *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 260.

write about everything as if the Church were constructed — say, in the sixth century — exactly on the model to which it has grown in the twelfth century. The St. Ninian, whose bare existence is hardly proved to the lay archæologist, is with them the head of a completed hierarchy, with dioceses for bishops and parishes for presbyters. Hence the extreme value of authenticated early records, such as Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*. In this life Mr. Burton has remarked, there is not a word importing that Columba 'considered himself in any way under the orders of the Bishop of Rome. That bishop, indeed, does not happen to be mentioned in the book, though it is discursive and gossipy, speaking of contemporary ecclesiastics and distant states. Twice the city of Rome is mentioned—on one occasion to lament that pestilence was rife there, and on another to proclaim that the fame of St. Columba had spread over Britain, Gaul, and Spain, and had reached Rome, the greatest of cities.' Nay more, the whole tenour of Irish mediæval history seems to bring into clear light facts which the ecclesiastical writers had sought to keep in the background or to suppress. M. de Montalembert is content to assert that Columba was not guilty of any open schism or rebellion against Roman authority. Mr. Burton, free from the prejudices by which M. de Montalembert is perhaps unconsciously swayed, perceives

that then and for many centuries afterwards 'the Irish Church was ever counted at head-quarters a troublesome self-willed establishment, and every effort was made to bring into it fresh elements from sounder sources of Catholicism.' The decisive step for insuring this result was taken by Hadrian IV., when he granted the island to Henry II. of England. The fact, Mr. Burton adds, is not easily realised by us, 'but few historical positions are better attested than this, that the English Saxon was sent to bring the Irish Celt to a sense of his duty to the holy see of Rome.'[1] Mr. Burton's conclusions may not be acceptable to M. de Montalembert; but it is impossible to maintain that in his hands the method of historical criticism has yielded merely negative results and led to an indiscriminate scepticism. His researches have enabled him to make many additions to our positive knowledge of facts; and if a complicated Druidical hierarchy is an idea rather than a fact, our stock of historical information is really enlarged by our deliverance from an old and widespread delusion. A knowledge which dreads the strict application of the laws of evidence is no knowledge at all; and the man who seeks simply to learn whether certain alleged events have or have not taken place, will feel a real satisfaction in discarding impressions which

[1] *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 257.

he finds to be not founded on fact. To shrink from the scrutiny implies a conscious weakness; and, on the other hand, nothing can be more certain than that 'we shall get accustomed, as we go on, to the destruction of larger portions of our belief. It is a useful process. When the historical stage is occupied by shadows, the mind gets bewildered among them, and we cannot easily see and estimate any little morsels of actual truth that may come forward with its honest claims upon our notice.'[1]

Celibacy of the Scottish monks.

The necessity, imposed on Latin hagiologists, of adapting history to a more modern ecclesiastical constitution at once precludes us from accepting unreservedly their accounts of the more ancient forms of discipline; and we decline to believe that the monastic system of Columba involved even the obligation of celibacy until we have some clear and positive evidence to outweigh facts which seem to point in another direction. In any case, we are fully justified in regarding the Latin assertion as unproven, when we remember that in Italy itself the question was not settled before the days of Hildebrand. Without going further than M. de Montalembert's pages, we have abundant indications that the accounts of the monastic system of Columba have been modified to suit the needs of altered times. His

[1] *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 105.

disciples are reckoned by thousands and tens of thousands, and the asceticism to which they are subjected is more severe than that of Benedict. Exhibiting in themselves a high ideal of saintliness, they strive to leaven the whole mass around them. Yet their work is undone almost as soon as it is finished. Two hundred monks of Derry, so the story runs, fall in battle with the neighbouring monks of Clonmacnoise; and no sooner is a great saint dead than we hear of nothing but fire-raising, assassination, and massacre through all the country round. It is quite possible, as M. de Montalembert thinks, that it would have been tenfold worse if the monks had not been there; but it is also possible that their monachism may have differed greatly from the accounts given of it by later writers. They were confessedly restless vagrants, roaming from land to land, and taking part in the wars of rival clans with more substantial weapons than their prayers.

Roving habits of the Scottish monks.

This roving habit, which brought about the introduction of Scottish monachism into Gaul, is the feature which most strikingly distinguishes the monks of Columba from those of Benedict. From the cloisters of Bangor on the coast of Ulster the passion of pilgrimage and preaching draws the kinsman or the namesake of Columba into Gaul. At Anegratis Columban enjoys the luxury of the rudest asceticism. For weeks he

lives in utter solitude, barely supporting existence on wild herbs and the bark of trees. The birds come to be fondled by him; squirrels nestle in the folds of his robe: wolves touch the hem of his garment, and, seeing him fearless, pass on their way. He is soon surrounded by unmanageable numbers, and he hastens to find a new home amidst the ruins of Lexovium. There, surrounded by the monuments of an old civilisation, whose fragments serve as materials for his ruder home, he proceeds to found a new society nobler and stronger than that which had been dissolved by its own corruption not less than by the violence of barbarous invaders. Crowds followed him to Luxueil, as they had followed him to Anegratis: and the everlasting praise (laus perennis) of a choir renewed from morning to night and from night to morning resounded amidst prostrate baths and abandoned palaces.

The elements of disquiet were about to disturb his earthly paradise. The Gaulish bishops were scandalised at his raiment and his tonsure. They were yet more offended by his obstinate adherence to a schismatical method of keeping Easter.[1] But if he refused to yield to the

Columban and the Gaulish bishops.

[1] M. de Montalembert considers (vol. ii. p. 435) Columban rather an aggressor on this point than a defendant. In his history he sees not the shadow of an attempt at coercion, or even of disapprobation, on the part of the Gaulo-Frank bishops towards a stranger who sought to impose his usages on others,

bishops in a question which we might hold to be indifferent, he resisted more firmly where the strength of his resistance redounded to his greater honour. Unlike Gregory, who could stoop to eulogise the murderer of Maurice, Columban had no words but those of vehement condemnation for Brunehault, whom the same Gregory found it his policy to uphold as a pattern of orthodox piety. Her son Thierri, King of Burgundy, came to visit him. Brunehault besought his blessing for her grandchildren the four sons of Thierri. 'None of these shall inherit the kingdom,' said Columban, 'they are the offspring of adultery.' He passed from the court unhindered: but the hatred of Brunehault brought about his banishment from Luxueil. From the home to which his heart clung, from the brethren to whom he was bound by a love yet more fervent, he was torn away, to be driven back to the island of his birth. But it was not so to be. The invisible force, which arrested the boat at Tours when the attendants would not permit Columban to pray at St. Martin's tomb, threw the ship, in which he embarked at Nantes, for three days on the sands. Wearied and terrified, the captain hurried the

and to arbitrate as a judge rather than obey as a Catholic Christian. Yet he was arraigned before a synod of bishops (Milman, *Latin Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 48); and the tone of his reply, which is wholly apologetic, although it may not acquit him of an ill-timed and unnecessary obstinacy, seems at least conclusive evidence against any active aggression on his part.

monks from his ship, and the stranded vessel was immediately afloat. The counsel of Thierri was frustrated: but to Luxueil there was no return. The old passion for pilgrimage and preaching revived. He sailed up the Rhine, sojourned awhile on the shores of the Lake of Zurich, and then in the company of St. Gall fixed himself on the banks of the Lake of Constance. Their success as missionaries was very partial; their means of livelihood scanty and precarious. But if human hearts would not yield to his prayers, beings invisible were at least terrified by his holiness. The Spirit of the Mountain besought aid from the Spirit of the Waters: strangers had driven him from his temple. 'There is no hope,' said the Spirit of the Waters: 'there is one who sinks in my lake nets which I cannot break. He is always praying, he never sleeps.' Gall, who was fishing, made the sign of the Cross, and bade them depart without doing mischief. He hastened to Columban, but the exorcism was scarcely begun before they heard the angry lament of the baffled spirits, whose cries presently died away in the long valley, like the confused murmur of a flying army.

Last wanderings of Columban.

The desire of Columban was to carry the faith of Christ among the Sclavonic tribes, some of whom were now to be found on the southern bank of the Danube. A vision compelled him to renounce his intention; but the

enmity of his neighbours rendered a longer stay at Bregenz impracticable. Columban prepared to descend into Lombardy. At the moment of departure Gall refused to accompany him. Columban rebuked his fears, and interdicted him from saying mass for the remainder of his life. From the Lombard King Agilulf, he received kindlier treatment than that which he had experienced at the hands of Thierri and Theodebert. Not far from the banks of the Trebbia arose the famous abbey of Bobbio, the last stage in the many wanderings of Columban. His rule proved to be not less attractive here than it had been in transalpine regions. His mind kept its freshness and its combativeness in what he termed the eighteenth olympiad of his life. While he wrote to a friend in Latin verse, which showed that he could make a graceful use of secular learning, he sought to enforce on the Pope the condemnation of the Three Chapters on which the Fifth Œcumenical Council had placed its ban. Theodebert was dead, and Thierri; and Clotaire had torn Brunehault in pieces with wild horses. Clotaire desired to have in his dominions the saint whose prophecies or denunciations had so signally served his own aggrandisement. M. de Montalembert judges Columban too harshly, because his refusal was not accompanied by a stern rebuke of his iniquities. Columban confined himself to the bestowal of ghostly

counsel; it would have been well for Gregory the Great, had he approached no nearer to the confines of error.

With Columban the early monastic annals of Gaul lose their special charm. The names of those who follow have retained little more of personality than the names of almost all who went before him. With him also departed the influence which gave to his work its individual character, and made his rule a rival to that of Benedict. Scarcely a generation had passed away before all the houses founded on his rule adopted, without compulsion or resistance, the constitution of the great Italian regenerator of monasticism. The reason is not obscure. The character of Columban stands out in bold relief, and his aggressive impulses serve to make its features clearer. But his aggression was altogether on indifferent points; his obstinacy was in defence of that which sense and religion would alike have justified him in yielding up. The very entreaty for permission to observe Easter according to a rule not recognised in the Western Church had in it something of sectarianism which augured but ill for the permanence of his rule. The battle for a peculiar form of tonsure was worthy of the heroism of Eastern monachism. And in his rule itself there was an extravagance of force too likely to defeat its own end. No law

Monastic rule of Columbân.

could have demanded a more complete self-renunciation, a more unscrupulous obedience, than the rule of Benedict; none needed to be severer in its punishments. But the rule of Columban lavished a savage abundance of blows for offences which it required all the subtlety of monastic ingenuity to discover. There were lashes for the omission of a response, lashes for the interruption of a cough. Inattention or misbehaviour at mass might be punished by two hundred stripes, not more than twenty-five being inflicted at a time. Scarcely less terrible was the length of their offices in the choir. Seventy-five psalms, with twenty-five antiphons, were to be recited on the greater feasts, thirty-six psalms, with twelve antiphons, on the lesser. There was enough in this, and especially in a position which, however pardonable, was in its essence schismatic, to account for the rapidity with which his rule gave way before that of Benedict, even if we put out of view the significant fact that the latter had received the seal of papal approbation.

Darker side of Western monachism.

In this sketch of Western monasticism no feature has been introduced which M. de Montalembert has failed to notice; no inference has been made which he would not himself fully justify. The picture here drawn he would probably allow to be impartial and true. But it is obvious that in this history is brought

before us not only matter which demands the most precise and well defined historical criticism, but also a peculiar type of Christianity. This peculiar type of monastic religion M. de Montalembert not only recognises, but, as we have seen, upholds as the very ideal of Christian perfection. Yet from his own pages it may be shown that even the best of monks sinned against charity and kindly feeling, against tolerance and equity, against faith and godliness; and that they did so by the irresistible necessity of their monastic profession.

Treatment of miraculous traditions.

With a simple and lively faith in the supernatural, M. de Montalembert professes not to have recourse to it except where the Church compels him, or where every natural explanation fails for facts which are indisputable. Yet he has allowed himself sometimes to speak of miracles and prodigies as legends, sometimes to rationalise them, and not unfrequently to state as positive facts details which are certainly not less mythical than others which he explains away. Unquestionably the poetry of mediæval Christianity clothes itself in the garb of miracle and portent. It is an ample reason for relating such prodigies; but it is a reason scarcely less conclusive for placing all monastic miracles in a single class. With few exceptions, M. de Montalembert relates, as he would relate facts, all but

those wonders which he regards as the mere expressions of poetry. The crags of Subiaco are said 'to rival the rugged rock where Francis of Assisi *received* the Stigmata of the Passion.'[1] Apparitions of demons haunt Benedict not less than the Egyptian anchorites.[2] He is able at a distance to read the thoughts and designs of his monks.[3] He restores a child from death to the arms of his father.[4] Gregory sees the angel stand on the tomb of Hadrian.[5] A father prays St. Maclon to remove the dumbness of his daughter: he obtains from God the necessary miracle.[6] Columban marks every stage of his journey by miraculous cures and other prodigies.[7] These and a thousand others are narrated as historically as the institution of the Benedictine rule, or the facts of Gregory's Pontificate. It is not easy to see why others should be explained away; and it may be fairly asked, if the system of Euêmeros may be applied to any, what becomes of the author's lively and simple faith in the supernatural? At the burial of a saintly widow, M. de Montalembert speaks of the spectators as crying out that they saw her husband's corpse raise its arm to embrace her. Gregory of Tours simply says that the corpse did

[1] Vol. ii. p. 10.
[2] Vol. ii. p. 23.
[3] Vol. ii. p. 23.
[4] Vol. ii. p. 27.
[5] Vol. ii. p. 97.
[6] Vol. ii. p. 348.
[7] Vol. ii. p. 446.

so raise its arm; and that the people were thus assured of the fervency of their love. A monk falls into the lake; at Benedict's command, Maurus walks on the water and rescues his sinking friend. M. de Montalembert quotes on this a rhetorical declamation of Bossuet, from which it seems impossible to determine whether he took it as fact or metaphor.[1] Nor are we sure what is his own judgment on that vast class of marvellous and sometimes beautiful legends which celebrate the familiarity of monks with the most docile or the most savage of brutes. If they merely illustrate the poetry of the age, a few specimens would have sufficed; but these tales fill almost his entire history of the monks under the earlier Merovingians. To deny the supernatural intervention of Providence in the lives of saints for the edification and comfort of the faithful would be, he maintains, a falsification of history. With the truth fable may *sometimes* be mingled; and whether authentic or not, there is not one legend which is a discredit to human nature, or which does not attest the victory of weakness over power, of good over evil.[2]

Institutional legends.

It is an assertion on which controversy is useless; but we may reasonably regret the want of any sound historical criticism in the admission of some narratives which are not

[1] Vol. ii. p. 16.

[2] Vol. ii. pp. 372–5.

miraculous or romantic. The austerities, the persecutions, the holiness of saints, the institution of the successive monastic orders, have each their typical consecrating legend. At the profession of Florus King Theodebert cuts off the first lock of his hair; the surrounding nobles each perform a similar service, until his tonsure is complete. M. de Montalembert sees in this a fact illustrative of the rising glory of monasticism. It might be more natural to regard it as a later myth setting forth the early fortunes of the order. A similar myth is found in the story of Sequanus, who is warned against inhabiting a wood infested by assassins who were actual cannibals. 'It matters not,' he said, 'they shall become gentle as doves:' and so it proved. His first appearance disarmed their ferocity; they declared themselves at once his menial servants.[1] The tale is harmless and beautiful. It is more strange that he should have admitted into his pages the montsrous legend of Febronia, which he cites as a glorious example of endurance under suffering. The tale obviously carries with it its own refutation. Renowned equally for her matchless beauty, her rigid asceticism, her profound learning, this saintly virgin gives her weekly lecture to the matrons and maidens of the town. She may be seen by none. The abbess places a veil to guard her from the

[1] Vol. ii. p. 354.

contaminating glances of women of the world. Under the disguise of a nun, the widow of a senator talks with her and embraces her. The discovery fills her with dismay; the widow makes atonement by taking the veil, and tending Febronia on a bed of sickness. The time of trouble comes. The bishop and clergy, the monks and nuns, fly at the approach of the persecutor, leaving Febronia alone in her cell. She is drawn before the tribunal of Selenus, and stripped of all her raiment. Selenus taunts her because she blushes not. 'I have never seen the face of man before,' she said; 'but the wrestlers at the Olympic games are not crowned till the strife is ended. I am here for the struggle; do the worst that ye can.' They inflicted a mutilation scarcely to be told, while the abbess, a distant spectator, overwhelmed Selenus with her execrations, and cheered Febronia by her prayers, till the final stroke consummated her peerless martyrdom. The legend is a mass of inconsistencies: it is not less clearly the ideal of such tales of persecution. One account places the scene at Sibapte near Palmyra, another at Nisibis. The desertion of Febronia is more incredible than her ready citation of the customs of Olympian wrestlers. If the appearance of the fugitive abbess is perplexing, her unchecked abuse of Selenus to his face is beyond all belief. The instant conversion of his nephews, and their pro-

fession as monks, is the necessary ending of a martyrdom which is called into question most of all by its own unrivalled glory.

Febronia by her death multiplied the number of penitents who hurried to the cloister. The great triumph of her life had been her victory over the widow, who was about to contract a second marriage. It is the ever-recurring theme of monastic exultation. The disruption of a family, the crushing of natural affection, the ignoring of all earthly ties, the repudiation of all earthly duty, inspire the monastic biographers with their most fervent thankfulness, their most legitimate pride. The most renowned saints had abandoned the duties of parents or children, of wives or husbands, to work out in the cell the one end of their existence. It is not the judgment of an enemy. Every example of such action is eagerly avowed: in the pain inflicted on others the penitent proves his own superhuman heroism. We are brought at once to the first principles of morality; we have here the crucial test of that monastic Christianity on which M. de Montalembert has placed the seal of his mature and deliberate approbation. The monk is one who flies from the dangers and pollutions of a secular life for the salvation of his soul.[1] If he

Influence of monachism on natural affections.

[1] Vol. i. p. 38.

breaks up the home of a family, if he inflicts an irreparable wound on the tenderest feelings of kindred, he does so the better to promote his own good and that of others in a life of religion. He goes to sacrifice himself, to crush all evil affections of pride, intolerance, harshness, cruelty; to subdue himself into gentleness of thought and moderation of language; to exercise and set before others an impartial and unfailing equity, which will repudiate all time-serving policy, and scorn to eulogise a crime. How were these promises fulfilled? Was there no flaw in the equity of Gregory and Hildebrand? no defect in the self-abnegation of Jerome and Benedict? It was the longing of Paulla, the devoted friend of Jerome, to leave to her daughter not the smallest fraction of her vast patrimony. Her success exceeded her hopes. She left a mass of debts and a crowd of penitents to be maintained by her. A father seeks admission into a convent with an only child, whom for the love of Christ he endures with a tearless eye to see clothed in rags, incrusted with dirt, beaten and tormented. The perfection of his Christian sacrifice is shown by his readiness to comply with an order to take his child and hurl him into the lake. At the age of eighteen St. Euphrosynê steals away from her father and her husband, and in male disguise buries herself in a convent of monks, where for eight and thirty years

she never left her cell.[1] Her father in utter despair (the husband seems to have taken the loss less to heart) wanders like a troubled spirit over sea and land, till at last before her monastery he begs the prayers of the first monk whom he meets for the assuaging of his inconsolable sorrow. He is speaking to his daughter. 'One day,' she said, 'thou shalt again see thy child;' but not until the hour of her death did she make herself known to her father, who spent the rest of his days in the cell which her piety had hallowed.

No greater insult to every natural feeling could be offered than by this climax of monastic extravagance. The true monk had no affection except for those who had made the same profession. The tears which never flowed for his carnal kinsfolk, gushed in streams on the loss of his spiritual brethren, or for his natural kindred, when, and only when, they were united with him by a higher bond than that of nature. Some

Monastic morality.

[1] From the sequel of the story this must probably mean the monastic premises, unless we are to understand that the wanderings of the father extended over more than thirty-eight years. Alban Butler (in October 8th) refuses to believe the story told by James of Heliopolis, that St. Pelagia during her penance was disguised in man's clothes, such a practice being contrary to the laws of nature, and condemned as an abomination in the Old Testament, and by fathers and councils of the Church. He thinks that her dress may have suited either sex; but Euphrosynê clearly passes herself off as a man. It is but one of the thousand contradictions to be found in monastic morality.

instances of affections thus perverted have been already noticed. But if the child, whose thoughts reverted with lingering fondness to his home, is smitten with sudden death, the loss of his brother, who had taken the vow, interrupts the eloquence of St. Bernard with a burst of irresistible sorrow. With an indignation not the less inhuman because it was justified by a sound monastic policy, Gregory the Great leaves the monk, who had once tended kindly his own sick bed, to die in solitude, and then, amidst the execrations of the brethren, casts his body on a dunghill because he acknowledged the possession of three pieces of money. The same Gregory could call heaven and earth to share his joy at the usurpation of the blood-thirsty Phocas, at the most woful of all royal tragedies. Words failed him to express his thankfulness and exultation. M. de Montalembert, while he fully allows the sin, holds it to be the only stain of his pontifical life: but his language of unbounded eulogy to Brunhilt is scarcely more decent. Even if we grant the incredible statement that her own life was pure, it is impossible to believe that Gregory could be ignorant of her systematic pandering to the worst vices of her sons for her own political purposes. Clovis murders a man whom he had himself tempted to parricide: Gregory of Tours immediately adds that God subdued his enemies

because he walked uprightly and did what was pleasing in his eyes. The same corporate spirit which inspired such eulogies as these led St Bernard to slander and defame William of York, one of the purest and most single-minded men whom his age produced. He hesitates not to ascribe to him the worst of vices, to lay to his charge the blood of the saints.[1] It is well matched by the silence with which, in his zeal to crush royal rebellion against the immunities of the Church, St. Thomas of Canterbury passes over the infamous life of Henry II. It agrees with the monastic bitterness which made Peter Damiani class the marriage of clergy among the most loathsome forms of sensual vice, and revile Hildebrand himself as an apostate because he surveyed the question in the simple view of ecclesiastical organisation. Damiani is furious in his support of virginity: but a more vehement upholder, a more model monk, is to be found in Jerome.

[1] The writer of the life of St. William, in the series of *Lives of the English Saints*, attempts to prove that Bernard had direct sources of information in more than one man who was personally acquainted with William. This only makes it the more disgraceful that he should have hunted him down with such persistent malignity for a supposed irregularity in his election. If he knew anything about it, he must have known the statement in which the monks of Fountains (enemies of William) assert that he was 'a man of high birth, adorned with many virtues, and in all respects worthy to preside over a cathedral, if his election had been more canonical.'

With the exception of marriage, Jerome in putting on the robe of a monk had practically renounced and sacrificed nothing. He was still the fiercest of partisans, the most adroit of flatterers, the most shrewd and calculating of politicians. In his war against all the softer and kindlier feelings of humanity, Jerome had succeeded no better than the Stoics in eradicating the darker vices of jealousy and malignity. No fouler fountain of vituperation can be found than his declamations against Rufinus, Vigilantius, and Jovinian. No pit can be too dark, no torments too horrible, for the man who dared to question the paramount merits of holy virginity, or to insinuate the possibility of reactions against an overstrained and extravagant discipline. Yet that nature, which he had insulted and which he thought that he had banished, had not wholly resigned its power even over Jerome,—the austere Jerome, whose personal character even Vigilantius ventured not to asperse. No man had ever a more magic influence over women, none ever lived with them in a closer spiritual intimacy. Matrons and maidens from the most noble families of Rome left their palaces to share his hard life at Bethlehem. They read with him, they conversed with him, they hung with rapt attention on his religious teaching. The affections can live even on a little food: there was abundance here. What woman could resist

such flattery as that of Jerome? who would not long to be immortalised in such eulogies as his? Of Marcella he speaks as his final judge in the most subtle difficulties of biblical interpretation. The horrors of the storming of Rome are more than compensated by the constancy with which Demetrias preserved her virginity. Paulla he extols as sprung from the blood of the Scipios, of the Gracchi and of Agamemnon, the true representative of Æmilius Paullus, 'who left her home, her kinsfolk, and her children, to live in poverty near the cradle of her Lord at Bethlehem.'

There are darker contradictions still. The forbearing tolerance of Cassiodorus, of Gregory, and of Isidore, the noble protest of St. Martin against the execution of the Spanish bishop Priscillian, scarcely relieve the sombre mass of monastic bigotry. Augustine of Hippo, who could not at first reconcile himself to the punishment of death for heresy, had not the same reluctance to accept the aid of the temporal power in the infliction of minor penalties. We need not dwell on the ferocious campaigns of Eastern and African monks, on the iniquities of the Alexandrian Cyril, on the apotheosis of Ammonius and the slaughter of Hypatia, on robber synods, and council-chambers polluted with violence and murder, on black-robed monks carrying terror through the streets of cities, and upholding dogmas by the strong

Monastic intolerance.

arm and the stout club. Not a little of the same morality meets us in the West. Bernard, the general of an order of peacemakers, could urge a crusade against the Moslem with almost a fiercer vehemence than that of the hermit Peter. In his words, 'The Christian who slays an unbeliever, is sure of his reward; more sure if he is slain.' It is no marvel that coarser spirits could take a savage delight in hounding on the armies of the Orthodox against the heretical civilisation of Provence. Yet it is astounding that even monastic ferocity could produce such atrocious miscreants as the Abbot Arnold, and Peter the monk of Vaux Cernay. It is hard to decide whom we should abhor the more,—the detestable zealot who in the battle-field, or amid the carnage of a stormed town, could give the order, 'Slay all: God will know his own,' or the cold-blooded historian who could complacently boast in his cell that he had witnessed and exulted in the unexampled atrocities of the Albigensian war.

The life of the hermitage and the convent.

M. de Montalembert remarks that the Merovingian kings passed with a rapidity which to our modern notions appears incomprehensible from the most horrible cruelty to passionate demonstrations of contrition and humility, and the devotion of a faith whose sincerity it is impossible to deny.[1] We are not driven to

[1] Vol. ii. p. 260.

deny it, merely because we strongly suspect its utterly spurious quality. In these rapid transitions there is nothing to surprise or perplex. Faith and religion, sacrifice and devotion, were to them alike external. The ungodly might be benefited by the prayers of the saints; the discipline of the saints was wholly concentrated on themselves. Religious acts and Divine blessings were joined together by a kind of mechanical connexion. The slaughter of an unbeliever was the salvation of his antagonist. Why need we wonder then that the crusaders of Godfrey and Tancred could go from the butchering of men and women, and the slaughter of infants, to prostrate themselves with tears and groans before the tomb of the Prince of Peace? According to this system the first duty of man is to save his soul. He does it most surely, who for this end severs himself completely from his fellows. In this life of merely personal interest he must have an incessant occupation to subdue every rising emotion of the flesh. He must pray and meditate as long as the weakness of his nature will endure; he must work with his hands to fill up all his remaining time. He must have a living faith, or his prayer will be of no avail. But if it be sincere, it wins a blessing not merely for himself, but for others with whom he has not the slightest social connexion; 'it turns away the Divine wrath,' it 'lightens the weight of the world's iniquity;' by it 'the voice of the Church

goes up incessantly to Heaven to draw down from thence the dew of Divine benediction.'[1] His life was to be one of mortification; but the sacrifice was to be shown in chastening his own desire, not in sharing another's burden or adding to another's happiness. If, from this naked idea of anchoritism, he passed into a conventual life, he still escaped not from the magic circle of virtues and duties concentrated upon self. He abandoned the exercise of his will, and his obedience became at once mechanical. The rule of Benedict aimed at filling up the whole time of the monks with prayer, meditation, and manual labour. Every hour, and every fraction of each hour, had its allotted task mapped out with the most rigid precision. There was no choice, no spontaneous movement, to one occupation rather than another. Centered in himself, guided by the will of another, not his own, he became the passive yet reasoning instrument of a system which in place of a principle of law had concentrated a coercive discipline.[2]

Protest of Teutonic Christianity.

We are brought to the fundamental idea which lies at the root of Greek and Latin Christianity, and against which Teutonic Christianity arose as a protest, not the less determined because it was in great part unconscious.

[1] Vol. i. p. 57.

[2] This exclusively personal religion is embodied in the celebrated manual of mediæval devotion, *Imitatio Christi*. See p. 45.

Between the two systems, there is the same contrast as between the constitutional freedom of England and the centralised despotisms of Europe, between the free and unfettered obedience of Athenian and the drilled mechanism of Spartan polity. It is here that the battle must be fought, it is here that the victory must be won for the one side or the other. On this point the clear statement of our convictions can never be superfluous. For it is not a question of choice between a monastic and a secular calling,—it is the question of all training, of all education, of every employment in life. It is a question whether we are to have a free and spontaneous growth, from which external checks are successively to give way before a deliberate submission to the principle of law, or the rigid petrifaction which must be the result of a multiplication of arbitrary rules. It is the glory of English freedom that it leaves to its citizens the choice of their occupations, the direction of their thoughts, the indulgence of their tastes and whims. It is the pride of English education that it is more and more banishing the ideas of mere coercion, more and more enforcing the voluntary obedience of the young. The English clergyman receives no different training from the English layman; the same range of thought and study is open to both. In striking contrast to this stand out the theological seminaries of the

Roman Church, in the vexatious minuteness of their tasks, in the fractional apportionments of their time, in the alternation of inconsistent and contradictory occupations. The system does not aim at producing free men; it admirably serves its end of producing moral and intellectual machines. Through the stage in which this external manipulation is an irksome monotony, the human spirit rapidly passes to that passionless state wherein the upholding of an institution or an order becomes the mainspring of all thought and action. Thus then the idea of English freedom is radically opposed, not merely to the idea of monasticism, but to the whole of that organisation, of which the grand result is the mighty fabric of Latin Christianity. The Teutonic idea, like the Athenian, refuses to regard men except as members of a society, as linked with others by manifold bonds, which it is a sin against nature to repudiate. It requires from a man a spontaneous obedience to law; it expects him to be prepared for the discharge of all duties which may be imposed on him as a citizen; it believes that he will be not the worse, but the better prepared for them by the versatile freedom of the Athenian than by the laborious drill of the dull and narrow-minded Spartan. If our words have shaped themselves almost into the expressions of Perikles, we can but insist on the universal truth involved in

his comparison of the two little states of Athens and Sparta.

Yet to the æra of mediæval monasticism, M. de Montalembert looks back as to the time of a true faith and a true liberty; not indeed of a faith which possessed a power equal to its authority, or of a liberty of which the terms were acknowledged by all. It was the liberty which resulted from balanced powers conflicting with each other, from the struggle of ecclesiastical and royal supremacy, when neither form of despotism was everywhere acknowledged. From this transitional state, with its positive evils and its promise of future preponderating good, M. de Montalembert turns with sadness and discouragement to the 'abandoned license and abject servility which alternately characterise modern society.'[1] He insists earnestly on the essential difference between the true middle age and that period on which modern France has fixed the name of the Ancien Régime.[2] It is his pride to think that in the former, men knew nothing of that 'unlimited power of the state which is now so eagerly invoked, or so easily accepted;'[3] of that strange and fickle mobility which leaves no hope for the legitimate growth of political freedom. The contrast is powerfully and truthfully drawn. But it is a

Ideas of freedom.

[1] Vol. i. p. 43.
[2] Vol. i. p. 229.
[3] Vol. i. p. 255.

contrast which does not apply to England. It is not true that her citizens 'prostrate themselves before the idol of the day, while they reserve the right of breaking, betraying, and forgetting it on the morrow.' It is not true that in England, 'the absolute independence of the sovereign power has displaced the sentiment and the guarantees of personal independence;' or that all local autonomy has been crushed, the better to break the bond which links us to ancient liberty. It is not true of England that 'a dead level is looked on as progress, and a common slavery as the guarantee of that progress.' It is not true of England; but it is a terribly true picture and prophecy of the present state and future fortunes of French society. When M. de Montalembert expresses his abhorrence and dread of that centralised despotism 'which never dies, and which parades its irresistible and pitiless level on a bed of human dust,' his words have the eloquent energy of truth; but the remedy for the evils over which he mourns is to be found, not in any recurrence to the ideas which underlie the system of Western monasticism, but to those which have had their auspicious result in the free constitution of England. The social state which is the result of the French Revolution, and which M. de Montalembert accepts 'without reserve and without regret,' is indefinitely removed from the idea of English freedom.

Four centuries ago the growth of liberty in France appeared not less promising than in England. Two centuries later France was shackled with a military despotism, while in England the several forces of the constitution were combined in greater harmony than ever. The overthrow of the old despotism in France was followed by a series of spasmodic experiments, which by a natural result have riveted the old chains with tenfold greater power. The only hope for the future is the gradual spread of that English principle, which is utterly opposed to every principle of monasticism or of civil government whose basis is an all-absorbing centralisation.

The conclusion to which we are brought is that the essential idea, the only legitimate form of monachism is anchoritism, the strict anchoritism of the Asiatic and Egyptian hermits. But at no time has the system been true to its idea. That idea ought to have produced a barren and dead monotony. It aimed at crushing all individual feelings; it ought to have arrested the developement of all personal character. But, from the first, in spite of their abject self-renunciation, the character of the man would make itself visible under the proposed self-annihilation of the monk. While Macarius was courting in a marsh the stings of venomous insects, Antony mused in his more graceful

Inconsistencies of Latin monachism.

retreat, soothed by the murmur of a brook under the shade of spreading palm-trees. While the coarser ascetic exhibited his gymnastic feats on the summit of a rock or pillar, Basil was meditating on the beautiful scenes which he compared to the island of Kalypso; and Gregory, his friend, though he renounced all else, refused to give up the one cherished gift of honeyed eloquence. Monachism was never stationary. No principle ever exhibited a more marvellous power of developement and renovation; none has involved so many contradictions; none has more strictly contained the seeds of its own ultimate destruction. Anchoritism, to those who do not accept its philosophical basis, is in some aspects repulsive, in others loathsome. The monasticism of Anselm, of Lanfranc, or of Bernard presents an image of singular majesty and beauty. It has, however, been attained, not by a modification of the original idea, but, in strictness of speech, by a real departure from it. The rapidity with which it passes through the stages of transition seems altogether capricious. Some houses continue for generations to exhibit the lower and more legitimate type; other seem at once to develope into high intellectual activity and greatness. While Benedict at Monte Cassino was crushing the minds and the bodies of his monks, Cassiodorus in his beautiful Calabrian retreat was raising a

monastery, of which the buildings were as vast as they were splendid, and storing up in it an immense library. The dull manual labour of Benedict was replaced at Vivaria by an incessant study of all art and literature, both sacred and profane. The rule of four abbots was needed to raise Condat to the intellectual level which the monks of Lerins had attained more rapidly. And with these more striking contradictions, there were also inconsistencies on almost every other characteristic of the anchorite philosophy. Some encouraged, others repressed, the extravagances of asceticism. While one upheld the superior merit of filth, another inforced the more attractive duty of cleanliness. The eye of Bernard refused to see the lake which lay directly beneath him, but Basil and Cassiodorus surveyed the beauties of earth, sky, and water with no scrupulous or reluctant vision; and in the songs of Columba the streams of his native land are heard 'with the sound of all their waters.' The narrowest ignorance, the most profound learning, rude barbarism and exquisite taste, an utter nakedness and a lavish magnificence of art and ritual, characterise different orders of the same age or the same order at different times. But while their history exhibits the tendency to pass from the ruder to the more graceful types, the rough Teutonic activity, poured into the effete civilisation of

Rome, furnished an endless supply of more vehement spirits, who chafed at the growing splendour and revived more or less successfully the ancient simplicity of their order. But to the earliest form, it became gradually more and more impossible to return or to adhere. Stephen Harding might plunge into the wilderness of Citeaux, in disgust at the degeneracy of Molesme; but his own disciple, Bernard, with all of Stephen's monastic spirit, and more than Stephen's monastic rigour, becomes the centre and virtual ruler of Christendom in politics, in science, and in theology. Finally, monasticism, which attained its highest glory by departing from its own idea, was the immediate parent of an intellectual and moral movement which has had its issue in Teutonic Christianity. So long as it succeeded in confining the monk to the routine of vague meditation, of endless offices and rude manual labour, the fabric of Latin Christianity was safe; but the fatal step was already taken, when to the warning against too much learning, a monk could reply, 'If I had the knowledge of God, I should never offend Him; they disobey Him, who do not know Him!'

Rise of the scholastic philosophy.

The dawn of real thought in the cloister was followed inevitably by the vast controversies of scholastic philosophy. Bernard might be victorious in his appeal to faith and authority against the subtleties of Abelard, but

the controversy itself was a pledge that the ashes which he left smouldering would again burst into flame, when faith and authority would no longer avail to quench it. Yet more, the reforms of men like Stephen Harding and Bernard were a protest not merely against the gentler rule of Peter the Venerable, but against every ecclesiastical departure from Apostolic simplicity. Every attempt to revive the stern asceticism of Benedict and Columban exhibited a significant contrast, not only to the magnificent abbot of a learned and renowned community, but to secular priests and prelates, whose sacerdotal character had long been disguised by the garb of feudalism. The contrast called forth the orthodox protest of Arnold of Brescia. That protest was for the time crushed in his death. It was repressed again in the funeral piles which were lit at Constance: but the revolt of Germany and England was the inevitable result when popes and councils could no longer hope to extinguish it.

From that time to the present Latin monachism has contented itself with controlling or crushing the natural instincts and affections of individual men and women. In the words of M. de Montalembert, monks have formed in all ages the great army of sacrifice; but since they have ceased to convert the nations, the sacrifice has been bounded to the mere abandonment of

Modern monachism.

family and home, and from this point of view the most complete self-devotion is that of the nun. The eloquence with which M. de Montalembert dwells on the beneficent lives and sweetening influences of the great company of virgins who have loved to think of themselves as brides of Christ, comes from no indifferent spectator. The plough has passed over his back, and made long furrows. He has had to give up his own child to swell the hosts which now conquer only in the cloister, and the iron has gone deep into his soul. The simple pathos of his words will be felt by all:—'This daily spectacle of self-sacrifice I, who speak of it, have myself seen and experienced. That which I had beheld only across the ages and in books was one day brought before my eyes, which were bathed with the tears of a father's agony. Who will not forgive me, if impelled by this imperishable memory, I have lengthened, perhaps unreasonably, this portion of a work which has too long remained unfinished? How many others have felt the same anguish with myself, and with a feeling of despair have looked their last on a dearly loved child or sister?'[1] The terms of the surrender differ widely from the conditions which 'the religious' of the earlier ages seem to have imposed on themselves or on others, and we may fairly say that the true sacrifice comes rather from himself than from

[1] Vol. v. p. 383.

his child. 'I go to die,' she said, as she bade him farewell,—'to die to you, die to all. I shall never be either wife or mother, I shall not even be your child. I shall exist for God only.' The language of the cloister is changed since the days of Winfrid. 'Since I have been deprived of the solace of your presence,' writes Egburga to the apostle of Friesland, 'I cease not to embrace your neck with sisterly affection. Since the death of my brother you are the man whom I love above all others.' Doubtless the love was pure; but the delight which she receives from the actual society of Boniface cannot be explained away. 'Do you not know,' writes another to her brother, 'that you are dearer to me than any other living being? It is impossible for me to put down in writing what I really feel.' These are but two of many passages, quoted by M. de Montalembert, which clearly show that the professed nun has had no thought of renouncing the natural affections which bind men to their kinsfolk or their friends. May it be that here too the system has lost something of its pliancy and its vigour, since its sphere of action has become more cramped? Have we here also a change which has been unregistered or discreetly passed over in silence by historians wise in their generation? Assuredly when St. Theresa, referring to her parting from her father, said that her love of God was not strong enough to raise

her wholly above the feelings of natural tenderness, she spoke a language little in harmony with the greetings sent by Lioba to Boniface.

The doctrine of sacrifice.

M. de Montalembert is a keen admirer of the free constitution of England, and his love for all that is great in the English character has acquired strength with years. It is perhaps strange that he should fail to connect the self-government of Englishmen with the fact that their idea of sacrifice is not that of Latin Christianity. In the monks and nuns of all ages he sees a host of intercessors whose lives are needed to keep the world sweet, and without whose prayers the salt of humanity would lose its savour. The same faith animates a prominent, though perhaps not large, section in the Church of England; and these also assert, with M. de Montalembert, that the rejection of their claims is the rejection of the belief of any medium between the soul and God. They who frankly admit that this truly expresses the state of the case,[1] must

[1] In an article on Ritualism, the Edinburgh Reviewer (April 1867, p. 455) remarks, that one of the Ritualist leaders regards the opposition to their system as 'tantamount to a rejection of the belief of any medium between the soul and God.' He adds: 'We believe that this truly expresses the state of the case. The acceptance or rejection of this belief is the turning-point of the whole controversy. Helps indeed, assistances innumerable, not only through the clergy, the sacraments, and the Bible, but through example, through art, through nature, through science, through history, through poetry, through church, through home,

maintain further that, although the monastic orders have done much to promote the good of man, the ideal which they have proposed to themselves is no more that of genuine sacrifice than a collection of probable statements is history. The highest forms of self-surrender are those of which the world knows nothing, and whose beauty is derived not from the halo of sacerdotal sentiment, but from the quiet discharge of unromantic and, it may be, irksome duties.

through school, through love, through friendship, through advice, the human soul has always needed and will always need, in her arduous, ever-retarded, upward flight towards a better world. But the belief in a fixed, external, necessary "medium betwixt the soul and God" on earth is exactly that which—if we have rightly read the Psalms of David, the Epistles of Paul, and the Gospel of Christ, if we have learned anything from the sufferings and scandals of the Church before the Reformation and since—true religion is always striving to dispense with; and the more it can be dispensed with, the nearer and higher is the communion of the human spirit with its Maker and Redeemer.'

CHAPTER IV.

TEUTONIC CHRISTIANITY.

THE idea of vicarious sacerdotal religion, of absolute spiritual empire, was pre-eminently the idea of Latin Christianity. It struck its roots deepest in the Italian mind, to which it was but a transformation of the traditions of ancient Rome. It appeared to have acquired an equal power over the other European nations. Yet under the seeming adoption of this system there lurked a principle of self-reliance and independence, the occasional expression of which sometimes perplexed, more often irritated the popes. To close and careful observers the signs were not wanting that the idea of Latin was not identical with that of Teutonic Christianity—that the mind of Northern Europe had not entirely acquiesced in total prostration before a spiritual autocracy, was not altogether disposed to merge individual religious life in the routine of sacerdotal observances. The indications of this state were not less variable and uncertain than the state itself was almost an unconscious and certainly an undefined condition. It showed itself sometimes in the resistance of the civil to the spiritual

Twofold protest against Latin Christianity.

power; sometimes in the assertion of a spiritual authority paramount to the papal; sometimes by a condemnation of priestly corruption and immorality; sometimes by an appeal to a higher standard than that of papal decretals or the canons of œcumenical councils. It seldom began with more than a protest against ecclesiastical abuses; it rarely stopped short with this. It sometimes exhibited a logical accuracy, but it was not unfrequently marred by a strange inconsistency; and throughout it betrayed the temptation, especially its own, to run into extremes. There were none who carried out the ideas of irresponsible sacerdotal supremacy with the uncompromising pertinacity of some of the prelates of England and Germany; none who more boldly avowed as the groundwork of their teaching a principle subversive of all authority, than some of the reformers of the same countries. The churchmanship of Hildebrand scarcely equalled that of Thomas of Canterbury: the fanaticism of a later day scarcely exceeded that of some of the principles (however it may have contradicted others) of Wiclyffe, of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague. It was certain that the tyranny of the Imperial Church would call forth a protest: it was not less natural that the protest first provoked should be one coming rather from the heart than the head, from men who, while they shook off one irresponsible authority

because in their eyes it seemed to foster manifest iniquity, were yet content to substitute for it the external authority of a written code, as to the interpretation of which they never anticipated any serious difficulty.

It would have been strange indeed had a discussion on the principle of authority and the theory of submission preceded the attack on evils which threatened in the issue to overthrow the whole framework of society. The monstrous abuses of mediæval Christendom were doubtless scarcely less glaring then than they are to us. The simony, the profligacy, the unbounded rapacity, whether of the secular or of the regular clergy, the luxury, whether of princely prelates or of the mendicant armies of Dominic and Francis, were doubtless as hateful then to men of sincerity and integrity as they can be to any now. But it is scarcely too much to assert that we cannot adequately realise the power which the sacerdotal system exercised even over those who most abhorred these developements of it. It had laid its mysterious spell upon every faculty of the mind and every affection of the heart; it had included within the circle of its authority every branch of human learning; it claimed the absolute interpretation of the Gospel of Christ. It came before men with all the prestige of infallible guidance; it held the keys of life and

The abuses of mediæval Christendom.

death,—of life and death not only temporal but eternal. It guaranteed the former to all who obeyed its dictates; it irrevocably decreed the latter for all who lay beyond the pale of its communion. And for the vast mass of men, how great must have been the attractions towards that absolute guidance which mapped out and apportioned all human destiny both here and hereafter! How potent, to that temper of mind which desires to repose itself altogether, in unquestioning submission, on the dictates of supreme authority, must have been the charm at once of its consolations and its terrors! The Church was the ark of salvation; its sacraments imparted and sustained the life of the soul. The sense of sin, the burden of remorse, could be removed by the decree of priestly absolution. Present penance could atone for future pain; the prayers of the priest on earth mitigate the purgatorial torments of the departed spirit. But the Church had also a rod for the chastisement of all offenders. She might impose days, or years, or centuries of penance; she could cut off the individual from her communion; she could place whole nations under interdict, suspend all religious offices; withhold the food of the soul here and consign it to the never-dying fire hereafter. It mattered not what might be the life and character of those who wielded this terrific power. The most licentious, the most violent, were still

the representatives of Christ, armed with the same spiritual sword, charged with the same mediatorial office between God and man. Such, by a strange developement, had been the issue of the sacerdotalism of St. Augustine. Founded (as we have seen) on a detestation of any interference between the human soul and the operation of the Divine Spirit, protesting against everything which, like the theology of Chrysostom and his disciple Cassianus, tended to substitute a law for this immediate influence, it gave birth to a system which placed the Divine Being altogether in the background—which intruded into His seat of judgment—which determined the future lot of man by the decree of priestly authority—which instead of a moral interposed an ecclesiastical law between God and man.

Against this system, what could rise in more obvious contrast than an individual religion? what protest could be more forcible than the denial of spiritual, nay, even of temporal power to all who were devoid of Christian holiness? The doctrines of Arnold of Brescia found a more congenial soil in the Teutonic mind; and that which Wiclyffe held rather by implication than explicit assertion, became the one animating principle of John Huss and his disciples. The enormous contradiction between the pretensions and the

Protests against the practical working of Latin Christianity.

practice of the clergy, which roused the indignant reprobation of the most orthodox churchmen, which called into being the councils of Constance and of Basle, which inspired men like John Gerson and Robert Hallam with a yearning for practical reform, furnished to the countrymen of Procopius and Ziska the weapon for demolishing the whole hierarchical fabric, and not this alone. A priest living in sin is no priest; the exercise of his power is dependent on his purity of motive and of action. The same principle must apply to the civil ruler; and John Huss hesitated not to apply it in its utmost strictness. Its ultimate results he could not or would not see. His weapon enabled him to grapple with existing disorders, and he cared not to consider whether his idea of the Christian Church was or was not identical with that of Montanus and Novatian.

Ulterior results of these protests.

In truth, neither side saw fully the issues to which they were logically committed. In such men as Gerson and Hallam, the Teutonic spirit developed itself in the practical determination for a reform of existing abuses; in Wiclyffe or John Huss, or even the Lollards, it sought to lay down a general principle to sanction and justify that reform. But Gerson and the orthodox reformers refused to acknowledge that their own position was fatal to the dominance of Latin Christianity, while Huss with

his followers failed to perceive that their appeal lay to an authority which might at the least be wrested against themselves. The evils against which they protested were manifest, and acknowledged on both sides. The Divine kingdom as set forth in the Gospel was confessedly very different from the theory or the practice of the papal autocracy; and they fearlessly appealed to the whole body of records of which the apostolic writings formed a part. In their eyes, as in those of the Teutonic reformers of a later day, the whole presented one uniform appearance, and exhibited the most complete, unbroken, indubitable harmony. Beneath this weapon the doctrine of papal supremacy, of absolute sacerdotalism fell prostrate. With it Teutonic Christianity proceeded to liberate the human mind from the shackles which had cramped its energies and stunted its growth. It was not wonderful that they were unconscious of handling a two-edged sword; it was not wonderful that, when Teutonic nations were divided against themselves, the doctrine of submission to regal encroachments and arbitrary despotism was upheld on the authority of those Scriptures from which its adversaries, as saints of God, derived the license to bind kings in chains and nobles with links of iron.

Latin Christianity had arisen on Augustine's doctrine of individual inspiration; it had proceeded to overlay that doctrine by a sacerdotal system, which virtually crushed it. To this same foundation Teutonic Christendom had reverted; but while it asserted strongly the independent operation of the Divine Spirit on each single soul, it asserted yet more strongly the existence of an authority external to the soul as stringent as the extremest developements of hierarchical supremacy. Still its position admitted a wider range of intellectual freedom; it was moreover one which at all times has been more successfully evaded in silence than assaulted with controversial violence. Under its sanction and by its influence has been raised the wonderful, if not wholly harmonious, fabric of Teutonic society; there has sprung up a new world of thought and literature. The ideas of law and order have been invested with greater majesty, perhaps first been fully comprehended, and something more of the quickening and softening power of Christianity been revealed than under the palmiest times of Latin sacerdotalism. It has laid the foundations of civil as of spiritual liberty, it has defined more clearly the sources of national wealth and prosperity, has called into being many empires, has enfeebled and extinguished none. Amidst these

Growth of Teutonic Christianity.

and its countless other works and triumphs, partiality itself could scarcely deny that it has, by espousing some principles and repudiating others, raised barriers in the way of its own more rapid and more perfect developement and acceptance. It has almost rejected by a rude negative the alliance of religion with art; it has scarcely attempted to solve a far more intricate and infinitely more momentous problem,—the relation of Christianity to philosophy. By the former course it has rendered the cause of the Reformation permanently unpopular in Italy. By the latter, it has converted into antagonists men from whose intellectual and moral strength it might have acquired no slight accession of force and power. In some countries or at different times it has sought to establish a tyranny scarcely less galling than the yoke which the reformers of the sixteenth century found themselves unable to bear, and thus has contributed, not much less than the Latin Church itself, to foster the dangerous fallacy which charges on Christianity itself the evils and abuses of certain organised societies which, claiming the title of Christian Churches, would prefer to be regarded as the Christian Church exclusively. Thus the ill-judged action of these societies has led to the more serious protest which marks the uprising of the human intellect against all absolute guidance in matters

which concern the relations of man with his Maker; and Teutonic Christendom threatens to become a battle-field for the decision of a controversy more momentous than that of Luther against Pope Leo. Never has there been a time in which it was more necessary to bear carefully in mind the distinction between real Christianity and traditional systems which seem to claim its exclusive authority: at no time have men been so greatly tempted to forget it. Yet if we lose sight of it, we may readily conclude that charges urged against the latter are meant also to apply to the former. The utter injustice of this conclusion must be forced on us by even a hasty survey of the history of Christendom.

Practical results of early Christian teaching.

For eighteen hundred years civilisation in its ebb and flow has exhibited the working of a principle which tends to substitute a spirit of unselfish tenderness for the hard and cold ideals of Greek and Roman polity, and which teaches men that the self-dependent magnanimity of Aristotelian ethics is a mischievous dream, the realisation of which would fill the earth with tyrants. It has obliterated generally the cruel distinction which Greek philosophy drew between natural freemen and natural slaves. By its beneficent influence slavery, in Europe at least, has given place to serfdom, and serfdom has been gradually merged in liberty. It

has taught men that their mutual relations have no meaning and no force except as they are based on an eternal and inalienable relation of all mankind to a Father whose justice cannot be wearied with iniquity and whose love is not to be conquered by ingratitude. It has striven to throw down many barriers which ignorance, superstition, and mistrust have interposed between man and his Maker; to teach them that the empire of an all-righteous God cannot be shared with malignant demons; to transfer to the oppressed and suffering the sympathy which had been reserved for heroes and philosophers; to show them that in sight of Him with whom we have to do there is no distinction of Greek, Roman, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. In this slowly-working leaven of Christianity we discern a living spirit, for which we look in vain in the dreamy Theoria of Aristotle or the ideal polity of Plato. We see it in the vehement conviction of Saul of Tarsus, that the final issue of the great conflict will be the victory of Truth and Love, a victory by which the last enemy of man shall be destroyed and God shall be all in all. We trace it in the art of the Catacombs, which refused to delineate not only the sufferings of martyrs, but even the passion of Christ,—which, instead of exhibiting the terrors of the day of judgment, displayed in its merciful and loving emblems a hope and a for-

giveness alike pathetic and sublime. Yet even in this dawn of brilliant promise there were ominous signs of coming storms. The expectation of imminent doom presented formidable hindrances to the developement of a civilisation which might be stigmatised as secular and carnal. The assurance that Christians were already in possession of all truth might be understood in a sense which would make the words an evil augury for the exercise of human thought. In the belief that without the pale of the visible Church there was no salvation, lurked the danger that they who now submitted eagerly to tortures and to death would, if they rose to power, inflict in their turn tortures and death on others; and no sooner was Christianity declared to be the religion of the State, than the dominant society began to furnish the materials for a great indictment, which is now being tried before the bar of human thought. During the ages which have since passed, the Imperial Church has won great victories and undergone some humiliations. On the nations which have been brought within its reach, its influence has been in part beneficent and in part disastrous. By its own profession it has laboured for peace: but its words have commonly been the signal for battles not altogether befitting the Bride of the Lamb. It has proclaimed its mission of rescuing mankind from unrighteousness and sin, and be-

yond all doubt it has wrought a work which with those who accept its yoke passes for the regeneration of mankind, and from all who look on it with the temper of impartial judges calls for patient and serious thought. Sometimes it may have modified the haughtiness of its tone: but on the whole it has proclaimed, with praiseworthy consistency, the utter blindness, misery, and degradation of mankind. Denouncing the reasoning faculty as the very source and root of all evil, it has insisted on absolute submission to the Church, in which alone there is safety for the soul. The human mind could never by searching find out God: it could conceive no limit to His power: it could not presume to define His morality. There was nothing, therefore, for man to do but to accept the teaching of the Society through which alone He had been pleased to impart the knowledge of Himself. The claim was unqualified; nor at the first was there much reluctance in admitting it. The appeal was made to feelings which in the infancy of mankind were all-powerful and which even under the highest civilisation of Rome and Athens had never died away. The worshippers of Zeus and Mithras believed not less heartily than the disciples of the new faith in the commingling of things visible and invisible, and in the action of spiritual agencies not only on the human mind, but on the inert

matter of the universe. Thus far the spirit of the new belief was congenial with the temper of the paganism which it sought to vanquish; it only remained to convince them that the world was a battle-field in which the souls of men were a prize for the contending powers of good and evil, and henceforth they would move amidst crowds of invisible warriors. Their carnal thoughts would now be blasts from the abode of rebellious devils; their heavenward aspirations would be breathings of immaculate angels who stand before the throne of God. The earth was not their home; its business was for them full of snares and delusions; they had nothing to do with its interests and its wants. The impressions of their senses were not to be trusted; their passions were to be crushed, their appetites utterly mortified; and if the work was not done before they came to die, they fell for ever into an abyss of endless and irremediable woe. The enthusiasm of a faith thus fighting hand to hand with a world which lay in wickedness imparted an irresistible weight to the Christian phalanx. The gods of heathenism were hurled from their thrones: but they became no mere nonentities. In the city and in the desert they exhibited to the Christian warrior their true character of malignant demons, and exercised over the unwary a power even more tremendous than that which they had wielded of old time. With

the victory of Christianity over Paganism the action of the Church upon the world underwent a momentous change. The soldier of Christ was to be dead to its corrupt society; but he was not left alone as he fought the good fight of faith in his march through the weary wilderness. Surrounded by wonders in his own day, he had also inherited vast stores of supernatural wealth. What then to him were the rise and fall, the progress and decay, of empires? What for him the calculations of statesmen or the welfare and rights of citizens? But, although these were in themselves as nothing, reasons of most constraining power impelled the now Imperial Church to grasp at temporal dominion. It had to do battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil; and it became a blessed work to wield the secular sword on behalf of the Lamb of God. Its influence was soon felt. Henceforth the functions of government were construed more and more into obligations to maintain the truth, and to punish not only crime, but sin. In the unequal warfare the instincts of humanity met with little indulgence. The weak barriers presented by natural affection were breached or stormed in rapid succession; and a gross darkness fell upon the nations for many a weary age. The stoutest hearts were cowed into abject submission, or took a desperate delight in making earth a hell. In the utter enervation and

thraldom of mind and body, there was scarcely any other object in life. If men multiplied on the earth, they did so only by yielding to a brutal necessity. The true relation of man and woman was that of deadly antagonism. To the Christian, woman, in the belief of Chrysostom, was 'a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill.' All men at the instant of death passed into a state of endless bliss or never-ending torment; and hell was the doom not only of the wilfully impenitent, but of all who had died without baptism. For the heathen of mature years, who had led a decent life, some might perhaps open the gates of heaven or of a colourless and monotonous limbo. For the infant dying unbaptised there was no such hope. The mother, to whom the premature death of her child must bring a biting agony even in the kindliest age, was assured that 'not only men who have obtained the use of their reason, but also little children who have begun to live in their mother's womb and have there died, or who, having been just born, have been taken away from the world without the sacrament of holy baptism administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be punished by the eternal torture of undying fire.' Life became indeed a dismal mockery. St. Mary of Egypt, after years of debauchery, received the

reward of her macerations in heaven: the babe unborn and the infant of a span long crawled upon the floor of hell. If the Greek of the Homeric age looked on every man as his foe until a special compact had made him his friend, so to the Christian his father, his wife, his child, were less than nothing, if lack of faith or perversity of belief placed a gulf between them. The seeds of terror had been effectually sown: the crop came up in a frightful indifference to human sufferings, and ran to waste in an exquisite delight at the infliction of ingenious and artistic tortures. Why, indeed, should they feel compunction? why listen to the foolish dictates of a carnal mercy? The sinner, and more especially the heretic, as the worst of sinners, walked on the very verge of hell. All things must be done to snatch the brand from the burning. The mortal body must be thrust into the flame to save the undying soul; and if a slow fire added to the bitterness of the death, so much the better, whether as a means of bringing the victim to repentance, or as a foretaste of the mightier pains of hell.

Theories of persecution.

It will scarcely be denied that in all this there is furnished a strong temptation to draw inferences charging on Christianity results utterly antagonistic to its real spirit and its ancient character. As little can it be denied that the temper even of the most illustrious teachers

presented a lamentable contrast to the words and the practice of St. Paul, and that their writings furnish a storehouse of weapons which may easily be turned not only against themselves, but against the faith from whose spirit they had so grievously departed. If, in Dean Milman's words, Teutonic Christianity is 'based absolutely on toleration,' then every sentence written to uphold theories of persecution could not fail to impart weight to the protest which the Teutonic mind must sooner or later raise against these corruptions of true Christian teaching. No one probably has in this way done more mischief to the faith of Christ than the great doctor of whom Mr. Lecky speaks as 'destined to consolidate the whole system of persecution, to furnish the arguments of all its later defenders, and to give to it the sanction of a name that long silenced every pleading of mercy and became the glory and watchword of every persecutor.' On Augustine, in his judgment, 'more than on any other theologian, more perhaps even than on Dominic and Innocent, rests the responsibility of this fearful curse.' 'He seemed to exult,' adds Mr. Lecky, 'in trampling human instincts in the dust and in accustoming men to accept submissively the most revolting tenets. He was the most staunch and enthusiastic defender of all those doctrines that grow out of the habits of mind that lead to persecution. No

one else had developed so fully the material character of the torments of hell, no one else had plunged so deeply into the speculations of predestinarianism, very few had dwelt so emphatically on the damnation of the unbaptised. For a time he shrank from and even condemned persecution; but he soon perceived in it the necessary consequences of his principles. He recanted his condemnation: he flung his whole genius into the cause: he recurred to it again and again, and he became the framer and the representative of the theology of intolerance.'[1] In truth, Augustine was concerned not so much with the welfare of men as in building up the 'City of God.' His piety, exquisite and tender as it might appear, never turned his thoughts to the fortunes of the women whose hearts he had wounded, or of the men whom he had seduced into error. The strong man was hopelessly fettered. He had abandoned himself to the belief that the Divine mercy could not be exercised beyond the pale of the Catholic Church, and he could not resist its logical sequence of a predetermination of human destiny irrespectively of the human will. 'This doctrine,' Mr. Lecky remarks, 'Augustine illustrated by the case of a mother who had two infants. Each of these is but "a lump of perdition;" neither has ever performed a moral act. The mother overlies

[1] *History of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii. p. 23.

one, and it perishes unbaptised; the other is baptised and saved.' The lot of Augustine had fallen on palmy days. The Latin Church was singing its hymn of victory over the prostrate gods of heathenism; but if it was a comfort still to know that the executioner's sword was ready to smite the remnant of their besotted worshippers, we may well understand how keen a satisfaction in seasons of persecution might be derived from the thought of those undying flames which should soon engulf the persecutor. Horrible though it be, it ceases to be matter for any great wonder if at such times some should fasten on the idea that the bliss of heaven received its keenest relish from the sight of the agonising torments of the damned. With a subtle and concentrated malice, for which persecution inflicted on himself furnished the only palliation, Tertullian exulted at the thought of the coming contrast when he should feast his eyes on his enemies in Hades, while he himself reposed in Abraham's bosom. 'How shall I wonder? How shall I laugh? How shall I rejoice? How shall I triumph when I behold so many illustrious kings who were said to have mounted into heaven, groaning with Jupiter their god in the lowest darkness of hell? Then shall the tragedians pour forth in their own misfortune more piteous cries than those with which they had made the theatre to resound, while the comedian's

powers shall be better seen as his limbs become more flexible by the heat. Compared with such spectacles, with such subjects of triumph as these, what can prætor or consul, quæstor or pontiff afford? and even now faith can bring them near, imagination can depict them as present.' If this be regarded as the genuine product of Christianity, assuredly we cannot wonder that Christianity should be evil spoken of; and as little can we wonder that when at length the Latin pontiffs rose to more than regal power, there followed a time during which the sun was blotted out of heaven, and a terrible harvest of superstition grew up under the baneful atmosphere of religious terror. All rare or unusual phenomena, comets and eclipses, famine and pestilence, storms and wars, were judgments inflicted by an angry God, or plagues wrought by devils or by human beings acting in league with devils. If the heretic could sin against God and the Church by calling into question the depravity of man or the justice of endless punishment, the sorcerer and the witch might pollute the world with their enchantments, and kill the bodies while they imperilled the souls of the faithful. The contagion spread through every class of society. Philosophers who could speak soberly on other subjects, judges who could be impartial in dealing with ordinary crimes, swallowed with unhesitating cre-

dulity the most grotesque and sickening tales of the intercourse of men and women with incubi and succubi. How indeed could they dare to doubt facts on which they held that the Church had set its seal, and for which they fancied that there was a mass of evidence more overwhelming than any that could be brought forward for the commonest accidents of life? If the facts of witchcraft were not certain, nothing was certain; nor could any punishment be too great for such blasphemous exercise of spiritual powers. The horrible orgies of the witches' Sabbath, the mad excitement of nocturnal journeys through the air, could not be atoned by the slow torture of a half-smothered fire, the faint foretaste of a fiercer flame which should never be put out. To strangle the poor wretch before the burning was in itself an outrage against the majesty of Divine justice; and fathers and mothers could look on with dry eyes while young girls and aged crones, who had leapt half-burnt from the fires, were forced back into the smouldering pile. Cruelty could scarcely be carried further. The heretic might die with some faint comfort from the thought that he had done battle for the truth and that after ages might hold his name in honour. For the wizard or the witch there was nothing but the blackness of darkness here, and tortures unimaginably awful hereafter. With minds weakened and maddened

by the religious opinion of the age, they believed themselves to be what their accusers and judges represented them; and, smitten down by the execrations of their fellow-men, sank into the flames, raving in a hideous despair, and cursing the Christian's faith, the Christian's practice, and the Christian's God.

Intellectual protest of Teutonic Christianity against traditional ideas.

If, as men come to see more clearly that such notions and practices are subversive of all justice and law, some are led on into an undiscerning rejection of Christianity itself, this is scarcely more to be wondered at than that victims of persecution should labour under the same fallacy. If judges boasted of the thousands whom they had slain and avowed a keen appetite for slaying more, it is not wonderful if in our days men who cannot share their thirst for blood should be tempted to condemn a faith with which such judges had nothing in common. Such inferences, however, point to the existence of an intellectual reaction against traditional notions, which, though it may now be gathering greater force, yet was begun centuries ago. In faint tones, perhaps, or with faltering accents, the voice of human instinct has made itself heard even in ages of the darkest superstition. If Tertullian made merry over the grotesque postures of comedians and emperors in hell fire, Origen could maintain that the Divine Being must

be able to heal every creature that He has made. If Augustine could consider it an article of faith to affirm the ceaseless torturing of infants, Pelagius could reply that God cannot punish the innocent for the guilty, and that guilt can never be transmitted. The interminable tomes of the schoolmen showed at least that even within the limits of Latin orthodoxy there might be vast differences of belief and keen conflicts of theory. The philosophy of Abelard or Scotus Erigena might not produce conviction, but it served to attest 'the sinlessness of honest error;' and the way was thus prepared for a more systematic opposition of intellect to the great fabric of authority as such, for that later phase of thought against which the Latin Church seems girding up herself once more to do battle.

Whatever be the issue, the working of the human mind cannot be permanently arrested; and the great religious movement which broke up the middle ages must continue to produce consequences not confined to the single province of theological belief. Art must continue to expand its inexhaustible resources, science develope new powers, philosophy explore with greater carefulness and earnestness the nature and object of human existence; nor will any appeal to traditional dogmas, or prohibitions professing the sanction of Scripture,

The course of modern thought.

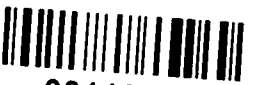
effectually check this the inevitable course of modern thought. The stream will only become wider, the current stronger and swifter; and the questions opened up by the philosophical belief of Pelagius and the destructive reformation of Leo the Isaurian must again be met steadily, patiently, and impartially. Christianity, art, moral philosophy, have gone on side by side, sometimes in alliance, sometimes in suppressed opposition, sometimes in open enmity. But if the progress of civilisation endows men with keener perceptions of all that is great and beautiful in the natural world, and therefore with a deeper love of art, still more must the same process hold good with the advancement of philosophy. One and the same century produced Boëthius and Gregory the Great, the moral philosopher, and the sacerdotal pontiff; but if the same juxtaposition be discernible still, it must be so in ever decreasing measure. Ethical systems profess to be based on no uncertain foundations, and disdain to adapt themselves to any fluctuating or contradictory standards; they involve nothing which shocks the moral sense, or defies the comprehension of humanity. That this cannot be maintained of popular systems of Christian belief, history bears sufficient witness; nor is it probable that the human mind will rest until this harmony be achieved. Right or wrong, Pelagius obtained

no fair hearing in his own day; he would not fail to obtain one now. In the eyes of Dean Milman, he was rather the assertor of a philosophical theory than the propounder of a theological dogma; and the more equable tranquillity of the former was eclipsed by the fiery zeal which animated the theology of Augustine. The latter made the Christian life an immediate inspiration, while Pelagius converted it into an ethical process. But if a man may thus develope into the upright citizen, by the other conviction only can he become the stern uncompromising reformer. Yet we may well believe that, as time goes on, philosophy will more and more uphold the immediate operation of the Divine on the human spirit, will more and more enable men to imbibe, with its serene and tranquil wisdom, that zeal which has hitherto been too much associated with the maintenance of a controversial theology. The day is already past when men could divorce this zeal even from the field of natural science. When Bonaventure insisted both on the improbability and the folly of any one dying in support of geometrical truth, he never supposed that his words would be falsified in Galileo. It cannot be strange if ethical science should assume, over the heart as well as the mind, a yet more constraining power. But Christianity, and especially Teutonic Christianity, will less and less call for such martyrdoms. With whatever

reluctance the admission may have been made, however vigorously it may, by some, be resisted still, Teutonic Christianity, in Dean Milman's emphatic phrase, is based absolutely upon toleration; and it is this fact which impels us to augur most hopefully for its future, which leads us to anticipate that it will not only less and less hold aloof from art and from physical or moral science, but will more peculiarly make them its own; that it will put down all incentives to superstition, not by rejecting art, but by cultivating its purest and highest ideas; that, while it makes war on the degrading forms before which alone for the most part superstition and fanaticism fall prostrate, it will elicit creations more beautiful than those of Francia, of Correggio, of Raffaelle; that, while it defines the province of human thought, it will not uphold that which contradicts universal moral principles; that it will find room for what is true, whether in Greek systems or in mediæval scholasticism, in the philosophy of Aristotle or of Butler. And in this its measured progress, it will embrace certain intellects and dispositions which hitherto it has chilled or repelled. By uniting the æsthetical with the moral developement of man, it will bridge over the gulf which has severed the Italian mind from all sympathy with Teutonic Christendom. By showing itself fearless of scientific truth, it will attract many to whom Christian

truth is as little, or as nothing. Some things on its outward surface it may have to put off, some of its positions it may have to reconsider; but that which has imparted to it life, that which sustains its strength, the pure and living force of the teaching of Christ himself, will be brought out into a clearer and more brilliant light, will be invested with a more sublime and heavenly majesty. Finally, it will show how human life may be conformed to that standard of the Christian Gospel, which is now virtually regarded as impractical and unattainable; how men in their international as in their individual and political relations, may be brought to bow beneath its yoke. To adopt once more the words of the great historian: 'Teutonic Christianity (and this seems to be its mission and its privilege), however nearly in its more perfect form it may already have approximated, may approximate still more closely to the absolute and perfect faith of Christ; it may discover and establish the sublime unison of religion and reason, keep in tune the triple-chorded harmony of faith, holiness, and charity; assert its own full freedom, respect the freedom of others. Christianity may yet have to exercise a far wider, even if more silent and untraceable influence, through its primary, all-penetrating, all-pervading principles, on the civilisation of mankind.'[1]

[1] Milman's *Latin Christianity*, book xiv. ch. x.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